



*Aboriginal news from across Turtle Island and beyond*  
**March 13 – 20, 2014**

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## **Aboriginal Arts & Culture**

# Aboriginal culture celebrated as part of centennial

Frank PEEBLES / Prince George Citizen  
March 13, 2015 08:56 AM



Kaydence Shelke, 7, was one of the fiddlers that entertained the crowd at the Aboriginal Culture Day in the CNC Gathering Place Wednesday

This past week marked Prince George's centennial, a benchmark aboriginal residents think of with concern for the future, at best, and hostility at worst.

Whatever the emotional foundation of each participant - dancers, carvers, beadworkers, painters, drummers - there was the vapour of prophecy in the air at CNC's Gathering Place, this week. As the college hosted a celebration of all-nations aboriginal culture, it was not their collected sciences or politics or industries that was forefront, but something else more personal in nature.

"Louis Riel once said 'My people will sleep for 100 years, but when they awake, it will be the artists who give them their spirit back'," said Leonard Paquette Jackson. He had a knife in his hand, and he was slashing and stabbing in rebellion. The flesh on the floor at his feet was not that of a colonial oppressor, it was wood whittlings. He had a commission to complete, being an acclaimed carver of native imagery. Like many others around him in the CNC atrium, he was creating on the spot. He was born Cree, a prairie nationality, but raised on Vancouver Island which is the influence he exhibits in his statues and regalia.

"There is a lot of swapping and sharing," he said. "It's a good thing. We put our hands out in welcome, in giving, not in taking anything. If you can't share, what's the point of doing art? - it's useless."

Another who was representing multiple cultures was Kelsey Abraham. He is a member of the Lake Babine Nation's frog clan, but he is a noted dancer and drummer of the Cree style. He and cultural colleague Donnie Mac (MacDonald) from Saskatchewan demonstrated this physically demanding and visually striking forms of expression. With painted faces and piercing music, dressed in resplendent uniforms of fur, feather, wood and leather (plus interfaced modern fabrics and accessories), they turned CNC into a prairie powwow.

"Every warrior dancer has their own style," said Mac. "When warriors back then would go hunting or have a battle, they would come back and tell their story through a dance, not language. These aren't random gestures. The movements tell a story. See if you can figure out what we are telling you."

"I started dancing when I was 5, 6, 7 years old," said Abraham. "I started by grass dancing. Usually at powwows, the grass dancers go first, to flatten the grass for the people."

He explained that each piece of his complicated regalia was given to him. One of the ways a dancer shows the progress of his or her skill is earning gifts of respect from others.

Another way to prove your cultural standing is to make the regalia items yourself. That is how Mac created his sacred costume. It requires careful study of multiple art forms. Mac said he grew up raised by his grandparents with little financial means. He started tinkering as a child as a way to turn broken toys and bicycles into things he could use, and that taught him resourcefulness and the value of work.

"Today, youth have it easier," he said to a group of children watching the event. "I am a self-employed artist, now, an entertainer. I feel very lucky to live my life this way, and be successful. Everyone wants to drive a Lamborghini or a Hummer, but family is more important. Success is living a good, healthy lifestyle."

Mac's niece was introduced to the audience, next. Hailey Gervais emerged dressed in a splendid and colourful regalia featuring ladybugs on the shimmering cape. She danced with Mac and Abraham, then danced a solo song. She is six years old.

"how do you feel when you dance?," Mac asked her, microphone in hand.

"Proud," she said, to a thunderous ovation.

Gervais was not the only child in the spotlight at the event. Three kids took up their violins and accompanied a group of elders for some fiddling. As a group, they meet each Wednesday at the Native Friendship Centre for lessons - old and young together.

"I love seeing how the kids progress. It just amazes me - their nimble fingers," said Jean Walker, one of the elder fiddlers. "They learn the music, and they learn their Metis culture at the same time."

Walker also had a display table with an array of leather items, demonstrating her moose tufting skills.

Free bannock (traditional aboriginal flatbread) was available, slathered in butter and jam. With this treat in hand, the public could wander among the many displays and talk with each artist. Most were elders, taking the opportunity to pass on the knowledge of their craft to others.

Julie Jacques, a member of the Takla frog clan, showed traditional beading.

Nadleh Whut'en caribou clan elder Roy Nooski showed his storytelling and herbal medicine skills.

Paige French, from the Takla frog clan, was also adept at medicines from the forest.

Mary Gouchie and Janet Kozak were on hand from the host Lheidli T'enneh First Nation to talk their dialect of the Dakelh language.

Bernard Andreason lives in this area now but he is from the Inuit culture of the Northwest Territories and hand-crafts dolls from traditional materials.

Michael Antoine demonstrated his mastery of wood carving.

At the young end of the spectrum was 20-something painter and carver Jason Edmunds, a Cheslatta frog clan member who was raised in Vanderhoof and is now in Prince George to eke out a living as an artist. He, like Gervais, like the many children in attendance, represented another statement made by Louis Riel in his aboriginal struggle to create an all-inclusive Canada. "We must cherish our inheritance," he said. "We must preserve our nationality for the youth of our future. The story should be written down to pass on."

For 100 years it has been, of forced cultural hibernation in the Dakelh - Tse'khene territories in and around Prince George extending to the Rockies and the Pacific, and a restoration is clearly going on, awakened by the artists of our shared region.

- See more at: <http://www.princegeorgecitizen.com/entertainment/local-a-e/aboriginal-culture-celebrated-as-part-of-centennial-1.1791687#sthash.nabZ3Ldo.dpuf>

## **10 quick questions with Juno nominee Leela Gilday**

## First Nations musician premieres new music video on eve of Juno Awards

By Kim Wheeler, [CBC News](#) Posted: Mar 14, 2015 8:00 AM ET Last Updated: Mar 14, 2015 9:07 AM ET



Singer-songwriter Leela Gilday. (Nadya Kwandibens, Red Works )

Singer-songwriter Leela Gilday finds out Saturday night whether she'll be taking home her second Juno award. Her latest album, the uplifting *Heart of the People*, is up for aboriginal album of the year at the awards taking place in Hamilton.

Currently based in Yellowknife, this Dene songstress has enjoyed success in Japan, New Zealand, Europe and Greenland.

These days, she is pouring her experience and enthusiasm into music across the Northwest Territories. Gilday sits as a technical advisor to the board of Music NWT, whose mandate is to help grow the music industry in the territory.

Before Leela left for a week of Juno celebrations, though, she took time from her busy schedule to answer ten quick questions for CBC Aboriginal.

### **1. Who is your favourite Indigenous designer?**

For casual: Sarah Erasmus from Yellowknife.

For fancy: Shosho Esquiro.

### **2. What do you do to stay in shape?**

Hahaha well I'm in decent regular person shape, not rockstar shape, but mostly I do yoga and take tabata classes at my gym, I also love cross-country skiing.

### **3. If you could perform with anyone, who would it be?**

U2

### **4. Favourite stage you've played and why?**

Vancouver's Orpheum Theatre, performing a one-girl show for 3000 Aboriginal youth back when I was 16 years old. Amazing experience.

**5. What was the first song you wrote about?**

Love of course. I think that's pretty much what all songwriters start out with.

[Leela Gilday - "Rescue"](#) from [aRTLeSS Collective](#) on [Vimeo](#).

**6. If you weren't a singer/songwriter what would you be doing?**

Probably a mountain guide.

**7. How did your fiancée propose?**

In our house, by surprise, on Valentine's Day, on one knee. I cried.

**8. Is there a song you wish you had written?**

I wish I wrote the K'naan song *Waving Flag*. It's so beautiful, so powerfully uplifting and hopeful. I am glad it got played so widely, I love empowering music.

**9. What is the one piece of advice you give to emerging musicians?**

Don't do this unless you love it so much you can't live without it.

**10. Caribou or Arctic Char?**

Caribou. I love arctic char, just cooked a big bada\*\* one last night, but caribou is like spinach for native people (in the way that spinach was for Popeye). Love, love, love it!

Check out the world premiere of her music video "Rescue." Also, catch Leela Gilday on Unreserved as she explains the concept behind her latest music video.

*Tune into CBC Radio One after the 5 p.m. news in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Nunavut, and after the 4 p.m. news in Yukon and the N.W.T. for these stories and more on Unreserved.*

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/aboriginal/10-quick-questions-with-juno-nominee-leela-gilday-1.2987979>

## **Indigenous fashion designers prove authenticity can be elegant, edgy**

By Kim Wheeler, [CBC News](#) Posted: Mar 14, 2015 5:00 AM ET Last Updated: Mar 14, 2015 5:00 AM ET



The difference between indigenous designers and designers who mine the world for cultural statements is aesthetics and ethics, says Haida designer Dorothy Grant. PHOTO: Raven Bolero jacket from Grant's Feastwear line. (DorothyGrant.com)

Last week a Canadian design team revealed a controversial clothing line during Milan Fashion Week. They aren't the first designers to be inspired by indigenous cultural motifs. They won't be the last.

"Designers the world over have copied each other and used designs for professional gains," said Haida couture designer Dorothy Grant.

Grant was breaking ground in indigenous fashion design in North America in the 80s. She said the difference between indigenous designers and designers who mine the world for cultural statements is aesthetics and ethics.

"Ours comes from years of teachings, from our parents and elders ... We are on two different planes of understanding," she said, referring to her non-indigenous counterparts.

## **New indigenous fashion incubator**

A new project in Toronto called the Setsuné Indigenous Fashion Incubator provides a space for emerging designers to work together to learn traditional and new techniques.

*Setsuné*: Dene word for 'grandmother.'

It aims to learn and re-teach culture through various art forms of textiles, including fashion, says co-founder Sage Paul, on why she and Erika Iserhoff created the incubator.



Sage Paul is a designer and co-founder of Setsuné Indigenous Fashion Incubator. (Westend Studios)

“I’m hoping the incubator will prove that cultural appropriation is just not cool, I feel like that’s what it comes down to in fashion, because really, fashion can be that superficial in the mainstream world,” says designer Paul, who is half Dene.

“We’re not a trend and we’re doing more than ‘just fashion.’”

The incubator will offer courses like moose hide tanning, basic pattern drafting and sewing, silk screening and moose hair tufting and appliques.

“We use [the name] to acknowledge inter-generational cross-overs, blood memory and oral histories expressed in fashion and the arts,” according to the group’s website.

## **Authentic and ethical, elegant and edgy**

"I’m pretty cautious of using anything traditional in my work out of a fear of misappropriating my own culture," said Paul.

Her spring collection is called Strawberry Girls and her website describes it as "a reminisce of my Berry Fast. The Berry Fast is a coming-of-age ceremony to learn the teachings, importance and responsibilities of being a woman."

'I want to take our traditional fashion beyond the pow wow ground but maintain the respect,'- *Trip Charbs, First Nations accessory designer*

Integrity of traditions is on the top of Trip Charbs mind, a jewelry and accessory designer originally from Pine Creek First Nation.

“I want to take our traditional fashion beyond the powwow ground but maintain the respect,” said Charbs.



[Charbs' jewelry will be on the red carpet at Juno Awards this weekend](#), worn by country singer and Juno nominee Crystal Shawanda.

## Making it on the runway

Angela DeMontigny, owner of Young Native Fashion Inc. in Toronto, has a suggestion for mainstream designers who want to incorporate traditional influences in their collections.

“They should bring a native designer and/or artist onto their design team as a cultural consultant in order to show respect and ensure authenticity,” said DeMontigny. Her work draws from Chippewa, Cree and Métis tradition, and has been featured in Flare, Chatelaine and Say magazines.



Haida designer Dorothy Grant (Nadya Kwandibens, Red Works)

Respect, integrity and authenticity are the themes that emerge from each of the designers when talking about their work. Grant said she was driven to “design with integrity” in 1991 when Time Magazine put an image of a totem pole dress by Isaac Mizrahi on its cover.

Cultural appropriation isn’t something new to the indigenous fashion industry. What is new is the awareness of it, thanks largely in part to social media as evidenced in stories like Milan Fashion Week and anytime a celebrity or a model dons a Plains headdress other than a chief.

*‘When will we be on those runways as authentic interpreters of our culture?’ - Dorothy Grant, Haida couture designer*

Grant said that indigenous designers may not gain the recognition from the mainstream industry unless they make the waves to do it themselves.

“That is the nature of this business and I have long known that,” said Grant.

In the same breath, Grant wonders “when will we be on those runways as authentic interpreters of our culture?”

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/aboriginal/indigenous-fashion-designers-prove-authenticity-can-be-elegant-edgy-1.2991013>

## **N.W.T. Métis Nation producing Cree-language cooking show**

**Episodes to be made available online, on DVD**

[CBC News](#) Posted: Mar 16, 2015 4:56 PM CT Last Updated: Mar 16, 2015 5:30 PM CT



Kyle Napier, left, who manages the N.W.T. Cree Language Program for the Northwest Territory Métis Nation, attends filming of an episode of "Good Eating" in Hay River. (CBC/Jacob Barker)

The next edition of a cookbook produced by the Northwest Territories Métis Nation will feature a DVD of a cooking show filmed in Hay River and Fort Smith. The hook? Participants prepare recipes while learning the Cree language.

"We want to present a learning resource in a format that would be relatively accessible for those using those digital technologies," said Kyle Napier, who manages the N.W.T. Cree Language Program.

Approximately 100 people in Hay River and 200 people in Fort Smith speak Cree, according to Napier.

Sharon Pekok wants to be one of them. Pekok said her parents spoke three aboriginal languages, including Cree, but never taught her any of them.

"We could of had three or four different languages in our family but because of the influence, I take it, of the residential school, we were taught just English," said Pekok.

Pekok says she wanted to learn Cree for herself and pass the language on to her children, so she took part in the filming of a recent episode in Hay River, cooking fried fish.

"With our young people, we have to try to entice them somehow and a good way is cooking because they like to eat!" said Pekok.

The DVD will include six episodes of the show, called Miyo Micisowin ('Good Eating'). Between now and the cookbook's release in 2017, episodes will be uploaded to the language program's [website](#).

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/n-w-t-m%C3%A9tis-nation-producing-cree-language-cooking-show-1.2997223>

## Toronto theatre company the bedrock of aboriginal theatre

By [Rosemary Westwood](#) Metro, March 18, 2015



In Native Earth's latest production, *The Unplugging*, two women (played by Allegra Fulton, left, and Diana Belshaw) must fend for themselves after being cast out from their community because they can no longer bear children.

Ageism, environmentalism, a post-apocalyptic setting and aboriginal teachings — it's all on stage this week in the Toronto premiere of [The Unplugging](#).

The play blends the politics of the old (traditional knowledge for how to live within nature) with the futuristic (a ruined world devoid of electricity).

It's the latest offering from a Toronto theatre company with a 30-year history of upending the politics of mainstream theatre simply by telling aboriginal stories and offering a platform for aboriginal talent.

"If we didn't have Native Earth, I would say 80 per cent of the Aboriginal plays that have been produced in the last 20 years wouldn't have been developed," said [Native Earth Performing Arts](#) artistic director Ryan Cunningham.

Founded in 1982, Native Earth is Canada's leading — and oldest — aboriginal theatre company. It was the birthplace of revolutionary plays like Thompson Highway's *The Rez Sisters* in the 1980s, which debuted to sold-out crowds and offered the first on-stage portrayal of reservation life.

"There was nothing in place, no companies supporting aboriginal writers, playwrights, poets. That's where Native Earth came out of, a need to support the writers that were here in Toronto," Cunningham said.

More than 30 years later, it's still serving that crucial need, he said.

"Hearing my mentors for last 20 years talking about banging on the doors and having no acknowledgement... It continues to be very difficult to get Aboriginal productions in mainstream arts institutions," he said.

Even when inroads are made — *The Unplugging* is a co-production with Toronto's Factory Theatre — Native Earth can claim some responsibility: Factory Theatre's artistic director Nina Lee Aquino once worked there.

Cunningham now wants to make the company a leader nationally and internationally in Aboriginal theatre.

Native Earth is collaborating with groups in New Zealand and Australia. Its theatre in Regent Park is now the defacto home for touring Aboriginal works from across the country.

And Native Earth's annual new works festival has become the aboriginal equivalent of the Fringe Festival: launching new plays as well as giving actors and writers a chance to collaborate and grow.

### **More about *The Unplugging***

- The play is presented by Native Earth Performing Arts and Factory Theatre Co-production
- Torontonians can watch the play at [Factory Theatre](#)'s mainstage
- It will run from March 14 to April 5, 2015
- Audience members can pay-what-you-can up to \$45

**Direct Link:** <http://metronews.ca/news/toronto/1315640/toronto-theatre-company-the-bedrock-of-aboriginal-theatre/>

# Aboriginal Community Development

## Urban reserves bringing prosperity to First Nations & neighbours

**How an urban reserve is helping one First Nation rejuvenate itself - and why they say we should embrace them**

By Tim Fontaine, [CBC News](#) Posted: Mar 13, 2015 3:00 AM CT Last Updated: Mar 13, 2015 1:07 PM CT



Swan Lake First Nation Gaming room on urban reserve in Headingley MB. (Tim Fontaine)

They're helping First Nations climb out of poverty across the country and pumping millions of dollars into local economies, yet in Winnipeg the federal government is fighting a prolonged legal battle to keep a vacant army base from becoming an urban reserve.

At a recent meeting organized by the Canadian Mennonite University, residents in the Tuxedo and Charleswood areas had a chance to meet with one of the First Nations vying to develop an urban reserve at Kapyong Barracks.



Hundreds attended a meeting on the future of Kapyong Barracks as an urban reserve (CBC)

The former military base has been sitting empty since 2004 and many of the buildings and houses on the 150-acre property have fallen into serious disrepair.

Yet the prospect of an urban reserve had many in the audience wary.

"What's going to happen to our property values if this thing goes bust? What's going to happen to law and order in the area if that's a bust?" asked one resident.

The discussion was moderated by David Balzer, an Assistant Professor of Communications and Media at the Canadian Mennonite University. He bristled at suggestions the urban reserve could bring down property values.

"Why do we presume if it's First Nations, it's going to be the 'hood?"

One of the panelists was James Wilson, Manitoba's Treaty Commissioner. He said the comments prove more needs to be done to educate the public about what urban reserves can be.

"Their only connection to a reserve may be what they see on the news and a lot of time those aren't positive stories."

Wilson told the audience that urban reserves have been a boon to the local economy in other cities, like Vancouver and Quebec City. He also pointed to the Muskeg Lake Cree Nation, which has had an urban reserve in Saskatoon since 1988.

"The jobs and the wealth that's created out of that property has been tremendous," Wilson said. "It took a property that was a derelict train yard and turned it into what is now the business hub of the south-west part of that city."

Despite these assurances, there was still a lot of hesitation from the audience.

"It's not that people are opposed but there is a fear element," said one audience member, adding that residents don't want high traffic or casinos in the area.

"If you want us to go along with your ride, and we're willing, then we've got to know what you're going to be doing there."

### **Highway to success**

The rural municipality of Headingley lies just west of Winnipeg. To many, it's just a strip of industrial buildings on the way in and out of the city.

For the Swan Lake First Nation, however, it's been a gold mine.

The 50 acres of land they own straddles the Trans-Canada highway and was converted to an urban reserve by the federal government in 2002. It's home to a few offices, a gas station and a small video lotto gaming room.

But those few businesses have brought in millions of dollars for a community once mired in a \$2.8 million deficit.

Since the urban reserve has been established they've been able to build businesses like a solar farm, buy a bison herd, and set up an RV resort and rental cabins.

The community also bought new school buses, built a splash pad for the kids and constructed a modern band office.

And while dilapidated housing is the norm in many other First Nations. Swan Lake has been able to renovate around 95% of the community's houses.

Many places in the country - First Nation or not - are seeing their young people leave for greener pastures, but Swan Lake has people returning.

Justin McKinney, 22, was drawn back to his community after a 13 year absence by the lure of jobs and improved infrastructure. Especially for the children and youth who he works with in the band's recreation department.

"It gives the kids places to play around, instead of getting into trouble."

Francine Meeches is the community's chief. She says she can't understand why some people would be afraid of urban reserves.



Chief Francine Meeches. (CBC)

"People in this province can't continuously say 'you know what, because that's a reserve, don't go there.' We welcome anyone on our properties. You don't have to get permission to come and buy gas or come into our gaming centre. It doesn't work that way," she said.

"We're just like everybody else, just trying to make money for our people and just to create a better life for our people."



## **A welcome surprise**

It's been a far different road to an urban reserve for the Sapatoyak Cree Nation, who recently opened a gaming centre in the town of Swan River, a small town in western Manitoba.

Like other urban reserves, the biggest fight was the negotiations with the federal government. Sapatoyak first bought a 14-acre property in Swan River in 2006 but it took 6 years to have it converted to reserve.

Unlike Winnipeggers worrying about what an urban reserve might do to their property values, Swan River's town council welcomed it with open arms.

"That was certainly a welcome surprise," says Chris Henderson, who heads the Treaty Land Entitlement Committee of Manitoba. The organization represents 21 First Nations. 6 of whom are eligible to create urban reserves.

Two years before the land was even converted to a reserve, Henderson says the town had already signed a 'municipal services agreement' with the First Nation. Since the town couldn't tax First Nations, they negotiated an agreement that lays out how the band will pay for things like fire protection, water, etc.

So instead of taxes, the band pays the equivalent cost.

Those municipal service agreements are common throughout Saskatchewan, where there are 54 urban reserves. Henderson says it's part of why municipalities there are so open to the idea.

## **'Seamless' development**

After years of negotiations, the Long Plain First Nation established Winnipeg's first urban reserve in 2013. Located in a area next to the Polo Park retail district, you probably wouldn't know where the city ends and the reserve begins.



This Petro-Canada gas station and convenience store at 490 Madison St. in Winnipeg is owned by the Long Plain First Nation. (CBC)



Chief Glen Hudson says that's a common feature in almost all urban reserves he's seen across the country.

"It would be seamless. That's something that we need to embrace as the city of Winnipeg."

Hudson says an urban reserve at Kapyong Barracks could be like the Westbank First Nation in the interior of British Columbia, where development melds with Kelowna and provides jobs and economic opportunities for all.

"We need to stop calling this a First Nation initiative. It's a community initiative."

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/urban-reserves-bringing-prosperity-to-first-nations-neighbours-1.2992695>

## **Flying Dust First Nation gardening program celebrates success**

**Flying Dust First Nation now sells to grocery stores, northern work camps**

[CBC News](#) Posted: Mar 13, 2015 6:40 AM CT Last Updated: Mar 13, 2015 6:40 AM CT



Worker at the Flying Dust First Nation's Riverside Market Garden during harvest. (Leonard Sawatsky)

The Flying Dust First Nation says its Riverside Market Garden program has become a huge success.

Located just outside Meadow Lake, the program started in 2009 with a handful of workers.

In the last three years, the gardening program has doubled in size. Riverside has signed partnerships with a wholesaling company that provides kitchens at northern work camps, and supplies local grocery stores.

It also has contracts with other First Nations and Saskatoon's CHEP Good Food Inc., a program where food boxes are sold to families.

"This is a realization of a dream we had a long time ago," said Manager Leonard Sawatsky. "To contribute in a meaningful way to food security for First Nations and Metis people."

Northern work camps have become a major customer for the project, purchasing around 40 per cent of Riverside's produce.

"Certainly they bought lots of potatoes," he said. "We got rid of one variety of potato, and we had planted about ten acres of that."

Riverside also has a store front building located on Flying Dust.

"We found that the people of Meadow Lake, the non-aboriginal residents were very good patrons of the store, and that worked out really well," he said.

This year, 18 people from Flying Dust will be hired to work at the garden, with many more people brought on as casual labour to weed and harvest.

Sawatsky said he hopes the program will eventually get large enough to put a dent in northern food prices, which is a problem in many communities.

"In a place like Wollaston, for example, they're paying almost eight dollars per head of lettuce," he said. "And that's just ridiculous. We can do better than that."

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatoon/flying-dust-first-nation-gardening-program-celebrates-success-1.2993457>

## **Allan Levine: A model for urban First Nation economic development**

[Allan Levine, National Post](#) | March 16, 2015 | Last Updated: Mar 16 6:07 AM ET



Instead of fighting it out in the courts, the federal government and four Winnipeg-area First Nations could work together to develop a new 'urban reserve'.

The term “urban reserve” conjures up all sorts of negative images and stereotypes for the predominately white residents of Tuxedo and River Heights in Winnipeg’s south end (of which I am one). The threat of crime and gangs all come to mind in any discussion about the fate of the nearby former Kapyong Canadian Forces Barracks, a 64.7-hectare of prime development land that has been tied up in the courts for nearly a decade in a heated battle between the federal government and four First Nations.

“What happens to our property values if this thing goes bust? If this is going to be an Indian reserve, are there going to be building codes? Garbage service? Fire services?” one Tuxedo resident asked at a recent neighbourhood community discussion on the issue, according to a *Winnipeg Free Press* report.

The resident did not receive an adequate answer because of the lengthy legal wrangling. The Kapyong Barracks were designated surplus land in 2004, shortly after the 2nd Battalion, Princess Patricia’s Canadian Light Infantry was moved to CFB Shilo close to Brandon, Man. The federal Treasury Board had intended to transfer the land to the Canada Lands Company, a Crown corporation, to develop. But a group of First Nations challenged that decision in Federal Court. They argued then and ever since that their treaty rights and a Supreme Court ruling in the 1997 Delgamuukw case — that implied the Crown had an undefined obligation “to consult with aboriginal peoples before infringing any aboriginal title, or lands to which a claim for aboriginal title has been asserted,” as Ontario Justice David M. Brown has explained — gave them the right to negotiate for the valuable Kapyong land.

For its part, the federal government maintains that it has properly consulted First Nations and is no doubt motivated to fight on in the courts because of the precedent this could establish in the future for other lucrative surplus federal land.

Several court rulings later, the matter is still not settled and though another Federal Court decision is pending, it is almost certain that the future of Kapyong will be only determined in the Supreme Court, a final verdict which will likely drag out for three or four more years. In the meantime, the federal government continues to pay millions of dollars annually to maintain the site, the City of Winnipeg cannot negotiate to widen Kenaston Boulevard, a busy traffic artery that borders the huge parcel, lawyers on both sides of the case are reaping healthy fees, and First Nations and local area residents remain locked in a war of words over the features of an urban reserve — or the more palatable sounding, “urban aboriginal economic development zone.”

At the recent neighbourhood meeting, Peguis Chief Glenn Hudson (the other First Nations involved in the case are Long Plain, Roseau River and Swan Lake), who believes the First Nations will triumph, articulated his vision “for a mix of residential and commercial development with green space.” That doesn’t really reassure the people who live in the area or clarify the tax implications and decision-making process, yet it will probably have to suffice until a legal decision is rendered and proper plans can be negotiated. All in all, another decade could pass before any real development, by either party, takes place on the site.

Contrast this nasty and stubborn legal tug-of-war with the relationship between the City of Palm Springs, a favourite Canadian winter get-away in southern California, and the Agua Caliente Indians, who are part of the Cahuilla tribe and the largest land owners in the Palm Springs greater area. By all reports, there is little if no acrimony and everyone works together for the betterment of the community.

The roots of Agua Caliente settlement in Palm Springs goes back thousands of years. In the 1870s, the U.S. federal government established a large reservation, 13,000 hectares of which today incorporates much of Palm Springs, and parts of adjacent Cathedral City and Rancho Mirage. In all, according to United States Department of the Interior Bureau of Indian Affairs, “there are 1,175 commercial leases, 7,671 residential subleases and 11,118 time shares on Indian land leases under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Indian Affairs-Palm Springs Agency.”

The Agua Caliente model is an impressive example of how negotiation and compromise can effectively function

In 1959, owing to the lobbying efforts of an all-woman tribal council, President Dwight Eisenhower signed the Equalization Act, which enabled the Agua Caliente to develop the land through leases as long as 99 years. (Owners of the downtown Palm Springs condominium complex I have stayed in, for example, have leases that run until 2043, at which time the band will presumably renegotiate.) By the late Fifties, Palm Springs had attracted Hollywood celebrities from nearby Los Angeles, who greatly contributed to the growth and allure of the resort — which the Agua Caliente capitalized on.

The Agua Caliente’s first successful development was a mineral water spa that opened in 1960 (close to present downtown Palm Springs) and within three years had been expanded into the Spa Resort Hotel. In the 1990s, the band opened a companion casino that has since grown into a lavish and profitable enterprise. Last summer, the band decided to close the hotel, which is now being torn down to make way for a more luxurious hotel and spa.

Though admittedly different than the land and treaty rights involved in the Kapyong case, the Agua Caliente model is an impressive example of how negotiation and compromise can effectively function and how under the right framework a First Nation economic development zone can thrive. On occasion, the Agua Caliente has helped the city of Palm Springs make up budget deficits if federal, state and civic revenues are not sufficient.

“We are just like everyone else,” Millie Browne, chairwoman of the board of directors for the Agua Caliente Cultural Museum and member of the tribe’s Heritage Committee said in a 2013 interview. “We live in the community. We go shopping, we eat out, we go to the movies, go to the salon, coffee shops. Our kids go to public or private schools. We don’t have special schools. We are not isolated. Our reservation is intertwined with the community.”

Figuring out how to establish a similar approach and attitude in Canada, rather than spending years and years litigating in the courts will go a long way to eliminating the bogeyman cast by the “urban reserve.”

National Post

*Historian and writer Allan Levine’s most recent book is Toronto: Biography of a City.*

**Direct Link:** <http://news.nationalpost.com/2015/03/16/allan-levine-a-model-for-urban-first-nation-economic-development/>

## **Half of the fuel tanks on First Nations reserves did not comply with regulations**

Steve Rennie

OTTAWA — The Canadian Press

Published Wednesday, Mar. 18 2015, 5:02 AM EDT

Last updated Wednesday, Mar. 18 2015, 5:30 AM EDT

Half the fuel storage tanks that remote First Nations use to power their communities fell short of federal standards meant to prevent leaks and spills, a new document shows.

The Conservative government is spending tens of millions of dollars to bring those fuel tanks into compliance with regulations that Environment Canada established in 2008 and which came into full force four years later.

Newly released documents show the magnitude of the task.

The government is still a bit shy of its goal of getting all the faulty fuel tanks to comply with the regulations, according to a September 2014 briefing note to the deputy minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada.

“As you know, the department is presently on track with the fuel tank program to address 51 per cent of fuel tanks known to be non-compliant and intends to seek funding for the remaining non-conforming tanks,” the document says.

“The latter includes those not only identified in the fuel tanks survey (2011) but also additional tanks that were not previously accounted for by the survey and those that may have since become non-compliant.”

The Canadian Press obtained the September briefing note and a related slide show from last May under the Access to Information Act.

One of the documents shows the government spent about \$61 million between April 2011 and May 2014 to bring 583 tanks into compliance.

Aboriginal Affairs would like to have 750 tanks — which it says represent “approximately 50 per cent of essential tanks on reserve” — in compliance with the regulations by next year.

The department has yet to respond to questions about the tanks.

The 2011 Conservative budget included \$45 million spread over four years to help First Nations bring their fuel tanks up to the new standards.

Aboriginal Affairs is also dipping into its own budget to come up with another \$34.5 million — which would bring the government’s total planned spending up to \$79.5 million.

The department is looking at ways to pay for the remaining fuel tank work once the budget money runs out next year.

Options on the table are to use money from the department’s permanent funding allocations — known as A-base funding — or from the First Nation Infrastructure Fund, according to one of the documents.

Fuel spills can devastate remote First Nations communities that lack the resources or ability to clean them up.

The community of Attawapiskat in northern Ontario had to close its hospital after heating fuel spilled in the basement at the end of November.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/half-of-the-fuel-tanks-on-first-nations-reserves-did-not-comply-with-regulations/article23515064/>

## **Return of 2011 First Nations flood evacuees won't 'happen overnight:' minister**



Flooding in the Lake St. Martin area is shown in May 2011.

Chinta Puxley, The Canadian Press

Published Wednesday, March 18, 2015 2:14PM CST

Last Updated Wednesday, March 18, 2015 4:14PM CST

WINNIPEG -- Negotiations continue to end a flood-forced evacuation of four Manitoba reserves that began in 2011, but the 2,000 people who fled their homes can't expect to return overnight, Aboriginal Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt said Wednesday.

Ottawa has been working closely with the province and the affected First Nations, said Valcourt, who added that if it were up to him, people would be back in their homes tomorrow.

"But we're talking here about rebuilding -- literally -- four communities," he said. "This is just the nature of the beast.

"This is not something that will happen overnight."

Valcourt added he's confident that talks are progressing and "hopefully these people can return home as soon as possible."

It has cost over \$100 million to provide all the evacuees from Lake St. Martin, Little Saskatchewan, Pinaymootang and Dauphin River with food and shelter. Most are scattered in hotels and rental accommodation.

A Red Cross study found many of those forced from their reserves are on an "emotional roller-coaster" and are adjusting poorly to life in the city.

Aboriginal leaders say some have committed suicide out of despair, while others have been exposed to high-risk lifestyles in Winnipeg. They say children have missed out on school and are being exposed to the dangers of urban life -- alcohol, drugs and gangs -- while residents are disconnected from each other and their traditional ways.

Valcourt said he's concerned about the toll the evacuation is taking, but suggested evacuees are being "well taken care of" by the Red Cross.

Grand Chief Derek Nepinak with the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs said governments have been dragging their feet instead of negotiating with the First Nations collectively to get people back home.

"It's a tragedy and we're witnessing it every day."

While governments continue to negotiate with each First Nation individually, people are languishing in hotels and isolated in apartments, Nepinak said.

Dozens have died, either from health problems or by suicide, he said. Families are breaking down and children are being apprehended by Child and Family Services, he added.

"All of this stuff is impacting our communities. I'm concerned that there is really not a tremendous amount of effort on the part of some people in government to get these people back to their communities."

At least half the evacuees are from Lake St. Martin First Nation, which reached a tentative deal last summer with the federal and provincial government to relocate the chronically flooded community to. Draft figures estimate it would cost almost \$100 million for housing, a new school, a nursing station and other infrastructure.

Some reserve residents said they didn't like the plan because the land being proposed is also prone to flooding.

**Direct Link:** <http://winnipeg.ctvnews.ca/return-of-2011-first-nations-flood-evacuees-won-t-happen-overnight-minister-1.2286402>

## **Aboriginal Crime & Justice**

### **Aboriginal legal services get \$467K boost**

By: Sudbury Northern Life Staff

| Mar 16, 2015 - 12:36 PM |





Legal Aid Ontario is providing funding for additional Gladue services in Northern Ontario and Windsor. Gladue writers prepare pre-sentence reports for First Nation, Métis and Inuit people accused of crimes.

Legal Aid Ontario (LAO) announced March 12 that it is providing funding to Aboriginal Legal Services of Toronto (ALST) for four additional Gladue report writers.

ALST, a leader in Gladue services, will receive \$467,376 to expand its Gladue report writing program to Windsor, Sudbury, Sault Ste. Marie and North Bay.

Gladue reports highlight the systemic factors that may have brought an Aboriginal person before the court. Some of the factors include impacts of residential school, child welfare involvement, dislocation, substance abuse and discrimination. The reports also provide information about community-based rehabilitation that may be culturally appropriate.

Each report is unique, as it reflects an Aboriginal person's life experience.

ALST's Gladue writers prepare reports for First Nation, Métis and Inuit accused at the request of defence counsel, Crown attorneys or judges at the sentencing stage of criminal matters. Based on the content of the report, the judge considers all alternatives to incarceration, including restorative justice programs, youth intervention programs, substance abuse treatment or counselling sessions with elders.

This allows judges to formulate sentences that focus on healing and helping offenders within their community, while addressing the over-incarceration of Aboriginal people in Ontario.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.northernlife.ca/news/localNews/2015/03/16-aboriginal-legal-services-sudbury.aspx>

## **More Peguis, Fisher River First Nations homes to get geothermal heating**

Posted: 03/17/2015 11:11 AM |

Some 850 Peguis and Fisher River First Nations homes will tap into the earth's energy for heat with geothermal technology under a new Manitoba Hydro plan.

The homes on Peguis and Fisher will be retrofitted for the technology over the next five years, under a memorandum of understanding signed Tuesday at a news conference with provincial officials and aboriginal leaders.

"Because of the forward thinking of their chiefs and council, the citizens of these two communities will benefit from lower heating bills and increased employment for many years to come," Aboriginal and Northern Affairs Minister Eric Robinson said.

Geothermal energy is a cost-effective renewable energy source particularly suitable for electrically heated homes to reduce costs. Through the use of a geothermal heat pump, space heating and cooling are provided. Like a refrigerator or air conditioner, these systems use a heat pump to transfer thermal energy between the ground and the building.

The deal will lead to over \$13 million in geothermal retrofits and in turn will generate \$17 million in energy savings.

"It's hydro money and it pays itself back," Robinson said in an interview. Under the deal, homeowners repay the cost of retrofit through their monthly utility bills.

"It's such an innovative project, the cost of heating homes with geothermal energy. It's something we're very excited about, many of these communities are now going through the retrofit. Peguis and Fisher River have led the way on that," Robinson said.

More than 200 homes are already equipped with geothermal heat on the two Interlake First Nations, thanks to an earlier partnership with Manitoba Hydro and its homeowner loans program.

Projects like these mark a new chapter in the province, said the minister who is also in charge of Manitoba Hydro.

"I'm very happy we're finally at that point in our history where we have this opportunity. Alternative energy is the wave of the future," Robinson said.

The deal was signed at a two-day alternative energy conference hosted by Aki Energy, a social enterprise agency that is the catalyst for sustainable and alternative energy projects on Manitoba First Nations, including the geothermal schemes.

"What we're saying is this work is going so well, we want to go on and finish every house on the two First Nations," Aki Energy business development manager Shaun Loney said.

Similar projects are going ahead on Long Plain First Nation and Sagkeeng First Nations, each about an hour's drive from Winnipeg, creating jobs for both.

"There are a lot of opportunities on First Nations. It's a myth that First Nations have no economic base. They do," Loney said.

"Our traditional economies were once centred on local economic activity that was good for the land and the people," said David Crate, the Fisher River Cree Nation Chief. "This is an excellent first step to us becoming energy independent."

Crate added the agreements mean work crews will add to their experience, allowing them to branch out and eventually work off-reserve in non-First Nations communities.

"Employment and economic development are what will make our First Nation successful," said Chief Glen Hudson of Peguis First Nation. "We will only be successful if we reduce the amount of money leaving our communities."

**Direct Link:** <http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/local/Peguis-Fisher-River-First-Nations-homes-to-get-geothermal-heating-296588871.html>

## **First Nations hold marine safety talk**

[Sarah Petrescu](#) / Times Colonist  
March 17, 2015 09:53 PM

Delegates from more than 50 First Nations on and around Vancouver Island will gather in Sooke next week to discuss marine safety and potential disasters.

"The environment comes first with potential risks in our territories," said T'Sou-ke Chief Gordon Planes.

The First Nation, already known as a leader in environmental management thanks to its solar program, is hosting the summit.

"For us, a clean, healthy environment is paramount to talk about," Planes said. "It's important we [Island nations] all come to the same place and meet to plan."

Planes would like to see his community's clam beaches restored and better water flow for fish. He predicts each community will have its own ideas and concerns to share, as well as common issues such as oil spill planning and what to do in case of multiple threats, such the 2011 Japan earthquake and resulting tsunami and nuclear crisis.

"We should be talking about the Kinder Morgan pipeline. The track is right at our front door," Planes said.

"Preparation is always the key and looking at the long term."



“Mr. Speaker, at the senior levels, we have discussed the issue of standardizing the writing system for Inuktitut in our schools and we believe that a standard writing system has the potential to build an environment where students would be better equipped for learning more than one language,” Quassa said in a minister’s statement.

And that future Nunavut-wide Inuit-language teaching standard could be based on Roman orthography, Quassa said.

That’s because staff inside the education department are now exploring the feasibility of using a Roman writing system in Nunavut schools.

In that effort, the GN has gained the support of the Inuit Uqausinginnik Taiguusiliuqtiit language authority.

“I spoke with them and they passed a motion that supports our work. We are looking to explore the benefits of transitioning to the Roman orthography writing system,” Quassa said.

But at the same time, Quassa said this is a “complex initiative.”

The first step would be a big implementation plan that cabinet would have to approve, he said.

That plan, which officials are now working on, would include research on:

- the capacity of existing staff capacity to provide instruction in Roman orthography;
- the development of teaching resources, including an inventory of existing curriculum documents and resources;
- the design and preparation of field tests; and,
- communications and consultation.

Quassa said this effort would help the territorial government meet one of the goals set out in its Sivumut Abluqta mandate statement: to strengthen the use of Inuktitut in Nunavut.

“In order to provide high-quality bilingual education, we are looking at the benefits of a standardized education system — one that would provide quality learning experiences and an equal opportunity for success for all students,” he said.

Throughout most of the eastern Arctic, versions of the church-developed syllabic system have been used to represent the Inuit language since the middle of the 19th century.

But in Greenland, Alaska, western Nunavut, and the Inuvialuit region of the Northwest Territories, most Inuit-language speakers use forms of Roman orthography.

At the same time Inuit leaders and language experts have debated the relative merits of syllabics and Roman orthography for many decades.

As far back as 1960, linguist Raymond Gagné developed a Roman orthography writing system for the Inuit language.

But most Inuit in the eastern Arctic, as well as the Anglican church, whose missionaries developed syllabics in the 19th century, rejected Gagné's writing system.

In his [Oct. 24, 2014 My Little Corner of Canada column](#) in *Nunatsiaq News*, Inuit leader John Amagoalik repeated his support for a transition to Roman orthography from syllabics.

However, some language experts believe that such a transition could be hard to accomplish.

In his [Feb. 4, 2011 Taissumani column](#), linguist Kenn Harper said any move from syllabics to Roman orthography could face strong resistance.

“These suggestions are generally met with an outcry of support for the retention of Syllabics. The suggestion of language change always excites passionate argument,” Harper wrote.

The Inuit Uqausinginnik Taiguusiliuqtiit language authority, set up under the Inuit Language Protection Act, is mandated to work on [the standardization of the Inuit language across Nunavut](#).

**Direct Link:**

[http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674quassa\\_gn\\_mulls\\_roman\\_orthography\\_as\\_nunavut-wide\\_standard/](http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674quassa_gn_mulls_roman_orthography_as_nunavut-wide_standard/)

## College commits to aboriginal education

By [Brian Kelly](#), Sault Star

Friday, March 13, 2015 3:27:04 EDT PM



Barb Day performs The Grandfather Spirit Bear with White Thunder Women Hand Drum Singers Friday, March 13, 2015 at Sault College.

Barb Day would have studied elsewhere if Sault College didn't have a native education centre.

The Batchewana and Garden River First Nation member started her studies at the community college in 1986 and earned diplomas in chef's training and native community worker.

Aboriginal ceremonies, sacred fire and gathering space in the shape of a wigwam at Sault College “gives you a really solid grounding,” she said. Day didn't find the same environment at other schools.

“I didn't feel like the colleges or the universities were a place that were friendly, or open, to First Nations people,” Day said Friday. “I just felt like it was something that was not ours.”

Day is a member of White Thunder Women Hand Drum Singers. The group sang an honour song, The Grandfather Spirit Bear, after college officials signed Colleges and Institute Canada's Indigenous Education Protocol for Colleges and Institutes.

Sault College, the eighth college in Ontario to sign the agreement, agrees to seven conditions including making aboriginal education a priority, include indigenous intellectual and cultural traditions in curriculum and committing to increase the number of First Nation employees.

Signing the protocol was “a no-brainer” for the college because the post-secondary institution has supported native education for about 25 years, said native student council president James Scott.

“This document just solidifies that further,” he told The Sault Star after the morning ceremony at Enji Maawnjiding Native Education Centre.

Aboriginal students from out-of-town “can still participate in their culture and have their education at the same time,” said the member of M'Chigeeng First Nation in West Bay, Ont. “It all comes down to feeling at home, being accepted in the institute and being able to take part in everything that Sault College allows us to do here.”

Scott was one of four college leaders to sign the document. He was joined by president Ron Common, board of governors chair Peter Berlingieri and Marnie Yourchuk, chair of the native education and training council.

The college's board of governors agreed to sign the document after a presentation by Carolyn Hepburn, director of native education and academic upgrading, at a December meeting. She was part of a national committee that developed the protocol.

About 25% of Sault College's 2,400 full-time students are aboriginal.

“We really offer a unique learning environment here at Sault College which really embraces our language, culture, traditions and values,” Hepburn said during the 35-minute event. “The signing of today's protocol really reinforces Sault College's already strong commitment to indigenous education here in Ontario.”

Common wore a deerskin jacket, a gift from Union of Ontario Indians, and a Metis Nation of Ontario sash during the signing ceremony.

He recalled the 1832 vision of Chief Shingwauk, of Garden River, of a teaching wigwam that would be “an integral part of (a) self-determination strategy for the Anishinabek people.”

“Today's document is another reminder of our commitment to providing a learning environment that seeks, promotes and cultivates intercultural sharing and inclusion,” said Common.

Other Ontario colleges that have signed the protocol include Algonquin, Canadore and Humber.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.saultstar.com/2015/03/13/college-commits-to-aboriginal-education>

## Fraser Report: Ben Calf Robe school a model for engaging aboriginal students

By [Claire Theobald](#), *Edmonton Sun*

First posted: Saturday, March 14, 2015 01:00 AM MDT | Updated: Friday, March 13, 2015 03:25 PM MDT





Beyond the sounds of feet shuffling through the halls, the ringing of the bell beckoning students to class, the hushed giggles and conversations between students, is the distinct rhythmic beating of a drum circle.

Here, at Ben Calf Robe—St. Clare Elementary School and Junior High, 11833 64 St., aboriginal teachings and the traditional curriculum are one, where students study math using a medicine wheel and learn science through nature.

“Bringing that culture and language back to them here, we know that is helping them rebuild their identity, their loss of pride,” said principal Emilie DeCorby.

Every student at Ben Calf Robe identifies as aboriginal, where students learn to read and write in Cree and English; learn music through drumming, Metis-style fiddling and dancing; and learn sewing through creating their own regalia used in the school’s pow wow ceremonies.

“They are really able to make sure that these kids know who they are, know where they came from and be proud of their heritage,” said Edmonton Catholic School Board trustee Cindy Olsen, adding educators across Canada has turned to Ben Calf Robe as a model for engaging aboriginal students.

Aboriginal students have traditionally lagged behind their non-aboriginal peers, with Alberta Education reporting 20% fewer aboriginal students achieving the acceptable standard on Provincial Achievement Tests and significantly lower high school completion rates — less than 50% of aboriginal students received a high school diploma compared to around 80% of their non-aboriginal — results that are echoed across Canada.

Ranked second from the bottom of Edmonton’s schools in the latest Fraser Institute Elementary School Report Card, with an overall rating of 0.1 based on provincial achievement test results, DeCorby knows the challenges her students face.

“Ultimately, what the results tell us is that our students are not achieving,” admitted DeCorby, who is quick to point out, however, that grades are only one measure of student success.

Far from a lack of aptitude, researchers have identified obstacles to achievement for aboriginal students including issues of poverty — aboriginals experience poverty at twice the rate of non-aboriginal people in Edmonton — as well as a lack of engagement and issues in transitioning between school levels.

In actively addressing these barriers, educators at Ben Calf Robe hope to help aboriginal students overcome these issues to achieve their full potential. DeCorby said they are always asking, “what do we need to do to set them up for success?”

At Ben Calf Robe, every student — regardless of need — is provided breakfast and a hot lunch every day.

“When we look at our kids, we need to remember that these are children of poverty and they’re also aboriginal, and a lot of us looked at the students and said that’s what it’s like to be aboriginal, but it’s not,” said DeCorby, who says sharing a meal fosters relationships between students and staff as well as reducing behavioural issues caused by hunger.

As part of creating a culture of belonging, Ben Calf Robe is the only school district that does not charge school fees, finding creative ways to ensure every student has equal access to opportunities without having to pay out of pocket, meaning no student at Ben Calf Robe will be excluded simply because their family has limited means.

“I really believe in belonging,” said DeCorby, who added that, when coupled with free busing for students, actively creating that sense of belonging has reduced absenteeism, another identified obstacle for aboriginal student success.

Students with behavioural problems aren’t suspended at Ben Calf Robe, but kept in school to work on their problems with on-site social workers, counsellors, behavioural experts and elders.

At Ben Calf Robe, not only is aboriginal culture weaved in to all aspects of school life, a third of the teachers identify as aboriginal, meaning students feel better understood and have positive role models.

“When kids identify part of their culture in the curriculum, they are going to learn,” said Francis Alexis, a member of the Council of Elders who is known not only for his ability to speak a multitude of languages and storytelling abilities, but also for his ability to teach geometry through the medicine wheel.

Alexis himself knows the sting of the residential school system, scolded for speaking his own native language — which he still maintains along with many others — and instead, forced to learn Latin.

“I’m happy for the kids because they have something we never had. They have a support system, they have guidance, they have elders,” he said, hoping these students will be part of bringing positive change.

While her students may not be the top performers on Provincial Achievement Tests, DeCorby measures success in less quantifiable terms, such as an individual student improving their grades, or seeing students proudly performing their cultural traditions in front of an audience, things that aren’t measured on standardized tests.

“They are just one piece of what we do here,” DeCorby said.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.edmontonsun.com/2015/03/13/fraser-report-ben-calf-robe-school-a-model-for-engaging-aboriginal-students>

## **Nunavut MLA suggests IQ camping trips may be a waste of time**

### **Students graduate, but “we hear their learning is not up to par”**

PETER VARGA, March 17, 2015 - 10:20 am



Isaac Shooyook, MLA for Quttiktuq, questioned the government March 16 about Nunavut's failure to produce high school graduates “up to par with the rest of Canada.” (PHOTO BY PETER VARGA)

Isaac Shooyook, MLA for the High Arctic riding of Quttiktuq, wants the Nunavut government to look at whether its policy on Inuit traditional knowledge in schools is actually helping or harming students' success after graduation.

Land-based camps in the spring are supposed to teach Nunavut high school students about Inuit traditional knowledge.

But Shooyook asked in the legislative assembly March 16 if those camps are one reason why Nunavut students are doing so poorly compared with students across Canada.

“Students are sent out hunting for a whole week, or fishing for a whole week,” the elder MLA said.

“In May, in our community [Arctic Bay] they camp in tents near our community, and the students take turns going there for a whole week, in Grade 12.”

Shooyook told Education Minister Paul Quassa that Nunavut students are clearly not on par with “the rest of the country” once they graduate high school.

“Is it because they are missing school a lot, or is it because of the curriculum?” he asked Quassa.

“We hear they graduate. However, their learning is not on par. So I’m asking, what is the problem?”

Land-based camps are part of the government’s policy of including Inuit traditional knowledge, or Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit in education.

[Shooyook has repeatedly questioned the government’s stated commitment to use IQ](#) in its departments. Lack of clear answers led him to walk out of the legislative assembly March 5.

He wondered, March 16, if the Department of Education’s land camps for Grade 12 students are doing more harm than good.

“When students are outside the classroom, spending a week somewhere, and not writing anything down in their school books — is that one of the reasons why they’re lagging behind? They’re not in the actual classroom?”

Quassa reminded Shooyook that the government has acknowledged publicly that student attendance rates are known to be low, and drop-out rates high.

“We’re trying to do some serious things about that,” he said, pointing to his department’s introduction of [new literacy and math programs](#), and its campaign to encourage parents “to be more involved in their children’s education.”

High drop-out rates are just a part of the problem, he said.

“If our students are going to go anywhere to further their education, for example in the south, the level of education has to be the same,” Quassa said.

“The strength of their education has to be the same as everybody else, no matter where that student moves, when they’ve finished Grade 12.”

The government wants to make that happen, he said.

The land-based camps are part of the department’s policy “to follow Inuit traditional knowledge” and “Inuit societal values,” he said.

“Hunting is part of it. So in springtime when it’s nice enough to live in a tent, that is what we do, for one week or two weeks, if necessary,” Quassa said.

“We’ve set those times aside for that purpose. To get back to the land,” and understand the Inuit way of communicating and learning, he said.

“They don’t lose any school time with the camp activity in the springtime. That is part of their curriculum.”

After question period, Shooyook gave notice that he intends to table a motion at the start of the next sitting of the assembly, May 26, “that the legislative assembly establish a standing committee on Inuit societal values and Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit.”

He said Pauloosie Keyootak, MLA for Uqummiut and newest member of the assembly, will second the motion.

**Direct Link:**

[http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674nunavut\\_mla\\_suggests\\_iq\\_camping\\_tips\\_may\\_be\\_a\\_waste\\_of\\_time/](http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674nunavut_mla_suggests_iq_camping_tips_may_be_a_waste_of_time/)

## **Partnerships extended to aid aboriginal students in Sask.**

By [Thomas Pillar](#) Associate Technical Producer Global News, March 16, 2015 9:10 pm



Partnerships extended with Saskatchewan government to improve education outcomes for aboriginal students in the province.

REGINA – The Saskatchewan government has implemented a number of changes to since the release of a joint task force’s report two years ago. As a result, one initiative will continue to bring the provincial education system and First Nation organizations together to help with the education of aboriginal students.

The Saskatchewan Ministry of Education announced Monday it has evenly distributed \$2.4 million to support 16 invitational shared services initiative (ISSI) partnerships in 2014-15.

“We are committed to improving education and employment outcomes for First Nations and Métis people, in response to the joint task force recommendations,” said Don Morgan, the province’s education minister.

ISSI partnerships provide students at on-reserve schools with the same supports available in provincial schools, such as speech language pathologists, math consultants and graduation coaches.

The ministry asked aboriginal education organizations to identify what types of shared services were needed and worked together to develop partnerships with 11 school divisions.

“The shared services initiative assists in providing services to First Nations students to help them succeed,” said Bobby Cameron, Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN) vice chief.

“First Nations in Saskatchewan are committed to our inherent and treaty right to education and this task force recommendation is a positive step and will support First Nations in delivering education services on our treaty territories.”

During 2013-14, the province invested \$1.5 million in 10 ISSI partnerships.

In April 2013, the task force’s final report was released by the provincial government and the FSIN, which focused on improving education and employment for First Nations and Métis people in Saskatchewan.

**Direct Link:** <http://globalnews.ca/news/1886267/partnerships-extended-to-aid-aboriginal-students-in-sask/>

## 4 Manitoba First Nations get money for school renos

By Staff The Canadian Press, March 18, 2015 3:17 pm



Aboriginal Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt announced Wednesday that four Manitoba First Nations will get funding for new schools or renovations to existing schools.

WINNIPEG – The federal minister for aboriginal affairs says four northern Manitoba First Nations are getting funding for new schools or renovations to existing ones.

Bernard Valcourt told chiefs in Winnipeg on Wednesday that the government doesn't know when the work will be done or how much it will cost. Bunibonibee Cree Nation, God's Lake, Manto Sipi Cree and Wasagamack First Nations are the recipients of the federal cash.

The money is to come from a \$500-million education infrastructure fund, Valcourt said.

"We should be able to go to design some time this year and hopefully be able to go to tender in the next couple of years," he said. "This is an investment in the future of the children of these First Nations."

Building or renovating all northern reserve schools at once makes sense because it will save money on construction materials and shipping costs, Valcourt added.

Chief Gilbert Andrews of God's Lake First Nation welcomed the news.

"I've been after a new school for over 20 years," he said. "We're going in the right direction for our students."

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**Direct Link:** <http://globalnews.ca/news/1889950/4-manitoba-first-nations-get-money-for-school-renos/>

## **Family violence on First Nations focus of youth conference**

By [Robin Burridge](#) on March 18, 2015 [Local News](#)

LITTLE CURRENT—Whitefish River First Nation, Sheguiandah First Nation, Wikwemikong and Zhiibaahassing First Nation joined forces to organize the 'Our History, Our Family, Our Connections, Building Strong Relationships' youth conference last week at the Manitoulin Hotel and Conference Centre.

"We felt that family violence is something that is prevalent in many First Nation communities and wanted to address this problem," explained Whitefish River First Nation Health and Social Service Manager Leslie McGregor, who helped organize the conference. "There is a lot of reasons that it exists, but we wanted to come from a direction of building strength and targeting youth between the ages of 12-18 because we think they are going to be the change makers. If we start with youth, they can break the cycle of abuse and build families and communities back up, from the ground up."

Bringing in the Great Lakes Cultural Camp as facilitators, organizers wanted to strengthen youth through passing on cultural knowledge.

The one-day cultural education program was a highly interactive and experiential session with youth, which focussed on teaching Anishinabek history with regards to how children were raised to become healthy citizens of their families and communities.

“Students will have simulated ‘living experience’ of each of the ceremonies that helped tribal citizens move from birth through end-of-life by the use of ceremonies that marked their progress of life in becoming healthy citizens,” explained the program from the Great Lakes Cultural Camps. “Teachings from each ceremony were shared and youth will identify how these teachings can create a ‘cultural kindness and goodwill’ in today’s family and community. Students will have an opportunity to state one commitment they can make to their family/community to create a better and safer place to live.”

“The day went really well,” said Ms. McGregor. “We had 56 youth attend the conference and received a lot of positive feedback. We really hope that it will make a difference and help end the silence and stop the violence.”

**Direct Link:** <http://www.manitoulin.ca/2015/03/18/family-violence-on-first-nations-focus-of-youth-conference/>

## **Feds funding school construction and renovation in four northern First Nations**

[Ian Graham](#) / Thompson Citizen

March 19, 2015 07:29 AM

The federal government announced March 18 in Winnipeg that it was entering into a partnership and providing funding to construct or renovate schools in four Northern Manitoba First Nations.

Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Minister Bernard Valcourt said the partnership with Bunibonibee Cree Nation at Oxford House, God’s Lake First Nation, Manto Sipi Cree Nation and Wasagamack First Nation was a step towards long-term economic growth and prosperity for their members.

“This partnership is a clear demonstration of that commitment and to helping to provide First Nation students with an environment where they can learn and acquire the skills needed to enter the labour market and be full participants in a strong Canadian economy,” the minister said in a press release.



The partnership will provide costs savings, the government says, by reducing costs for materials and shipping. This is the largest school infrastructure development plan undertaken by Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada.

“It is definitely a good day when a project on paper becomes a reality,” said Bunibonibee Cree Nation Chief Irvin Sinclair. “It is a great investment for our future that will pay dividends for many years to come. This truly shows a great commitment in partnership.”

For God’s Lake First Nation, the project will eventually allow some students to continue their education in the home community instead of leaving to continue their education after completing Grade 9.

“This is a good investment on the government and First Nation’s part and will improve everything all around,” said Chief Gilbert Andrews.

Wasagamack First Nation currently has 610 students and only those from preschool to Grade 7 can be accommodated in the main school building that was built in 1976. Students in Grade 8 and higher study in portable classrooms around the school.

“Wasagamack is thrilled about this project that will provide high school students with the necessary space and programming they rightly deserve and need in order to complete their high school education on Wasagamack First Nation,” said Chief Sharon Mason.

- See more at: <http://www.thompsoncitizen.net/news/nickel-belt/feds-funding-school-construction-and-renovation-in-four-northern-first-nations-1.1797596#sthash.cLrLA9BR.dpuf>

## Aboriginal Health

### **Appeal deadline in controversial aboriginal medicine case extended**

TORONTO — The Canadian Press

Published Friday, Mar. 13 2015, 4:01 PM EDT

Last updated Friday, Mar. 13 2015, 4:30 PM EDT

The Ontario government now has until April 2 to appeal a controversial court ruling that said the family of an 11-year-old First Nations girl with cancer has a constitutional right to choose traditional aboriginal medicine over chemotherapy.

A spokesman for the Ministry of the Attorney General says the original March 13 deadline to file an appeal was extended because the government is still working with the family to find “the most respectful and effective” ways to provide health care for the girl.

The girl, whose name cannot be revealed due to a publication ban, was receiving chemo last September before her mother removed her and took her to Florida for alternative therapy.

That decision prompted the McMaster Children’s Hospital in Hamilton to take the Brant Family and Children’s Services to court, seeking to have the child apprehended and placed back into chemotherapy.

A judge dismissed the hospital’s application in November, saying traditional aboriginal treatments were in existence before First Nations communities were in contact with Europeans, and were consequently entitled to special protection in Canada.

The girl’s mother said at a recent conference on aboriginal medicine that she has met with provincial government officials and they been “respectful and compassionate.”

**Direct Link:** <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/life/health-and-fitness/appeal-deadline-in-controversial-aboriginal-medicine-case-extended/article23456276/>

## **Appeal deadline extended in aboriginal medicine case involving girl with cancer**

### **Family of 11-year-old girl and Ontario government holding meetings about care**

The Canadian Press Posted: Mar 16, 2015 8:15 PM ET Last Updated: Mar 17, 2015 1:08 PM ET



The young girl with cancer, known as J.J. in the media, can't be identified because of a publication ban. Her parents and the government are holding talks about how to best handle her care, a government official says. (CBC)

The Ontario government now has until April 2 to appeal a controversial court ruling that said the family of an 11-year-old First Nations girl with cancer has a constitutional right to choose traditional aboriginal medicine over chemotherapy.

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**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/aboriginal/appeal-deadline-extended-in-aboriginal-medicine-case-involving-girl-with-cancer-1.2997670>

## **Internal Aboriginal Affairs study calls for increased Nutrition North funding**

[National News](#) | March 18, 2015 by [APTN National News](#) | [0 Comments](#)

### ***APTN National News***

**OTTAWA**—The federal government needs to invest more money into its Northern food subsidy program, [according to an internal Aboriginal Affairs study](#).

The study of the Nutrition North food subsidy program for isolated Northern communities was commissioned in 2012 and posted on the federal Aboriginal Affairs department's website last week.

The study found that with population levels rising at an increased pace and country food consumption dropping, the pressures on the Nutrition North program will continue to increase.

“Consideration should be given to increase the funding of (Nutrition North) to meet this demand,” said the report. “(Nutrition North) should at least be indexed to inflation or to changes in costs that are major contributors to the cost of food retailing in the North.”

The report also found that while Nutrition North did lower the price of the products targeted for the subsidy, the overall cost of food remains high in the North.

“Is lowering prices enough for local residents who are managing their households on limited and fixed budgets? We believe the answer is ‘No,’” said the report. “Those with limited incomes are struggling, and increased efforts must be made to narrow the gap between disposable incomes and the price of a healthy food basket.”

The study also found that Northern attitudes toward country food were beginning to shift. The study found that country food consumption could start dropping as younger generations were “less interested” in living off the land. The study recommended the federal department study the “Greenland model” where country food is sent “straight to local markets.”

The Harper government has said it is increasing the amount of money going to Nutrition North, including an additional \$11.3 million investment announced last November for the current fiscal year.

The federal government has also said it will be applying a 5 per cent “escalator” to the “grants and contributions” funds given to food retailers. The escalator will see funding for Nutrition North grow from \$65.2 million in the 2014-2015 fiscal year, to \$68.5 million next year.

In a recent report, federal Auditor General Michael Ferguson found that the federal Aboriginal Affairs department has no idea whether the food subsidy program is making nutritious and perishable food like vegetables more accessible and affordable. The department also has no clue whether northern retailers are passing on the subsidy provided by Ottawa on to mostly Indigenous Northern residents living in isolated communities, according to Ferguson.

In its fall 2014 report, the Auditor General found that the department doesn’t even have a definition for affordability and never bothered to analyze the profit margins of Northern food retailers to determine whether they are making money off the subsidy or passing it on.

Aboriginal Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt said the department would be implementing the report’s recommendations and retailers would be required to reveal their profit margins beginning this April.

The study focused on the communities of Aklavik, NWT, Igloolik, Arviat and Igloolik in Nunavut, Garden Hill and Lac Brochet in Manitoba, Fort Severn, Ont., along with Puvirnituq and Quaqtaq in Quebec.

**Direct Link:** <http://aptn.ca/news/2015/03/18/internal-aboriginal-affairs-study-calls-increased-nutrition-north-funding/>

## **Hippocrates Health, spa attended by aboriginal girls refusing chemo, sees fine cancelled**

**Florida clinic directors previously ordered to stop practising medicine by state**

By Marnie Luke, [CBC News](#) Posted: Mar 19, 2015 2:52 PM ET Last Updated: Mar 19, 2015 3:33 PM ET



Brian Clement had been accused of practising medicine without a licence at the Hippocrates Health Institute but his fine and notice to 'cease and desist' issued last month was dropped by Florida's Department of Health. (CBC)

Florida officials say they have "insufficient evidence to pursue further legal action" against the co-directors of a health spa where two Ontario First Nations girls with leukemia received treatment, one of whom later died.

The state's Department of Health had been investigating complaints that Brian and Anna Maria Clement of the Hippocrates Health Institute were practising medicine without a licence, and had issued notices to cease and desist, as well as a fine to Brian Clement.

"After further review of the investigative materials, it was determined that there is insufficient evidence to pursue further legal action in this matter," the department said in an email this week to CBC News.

"A letter was sent to both parties instructing them to disregard the notice to cease and desist." The fine against Brian Clement has been dropped, too.



Brian and Anna Maria Clement are co-directors of the Hippocrates Health Institute in Florida. (Hippocrates Health Institute)

Clement issued a statement through a public relations firm, saying the state found "nothing within these claims of any substance."

"The Department of Health's decision to remove these charges conclusively demonstrates what we've said all along — that my wife and I are licensed nutritionists who have not and do not practise medicine."

## **CBC reports triggered complaint**

The complaint against Brian Clement was filed by a Florida lawyer who said she became concerned following a CBC News investigation into the Hippocrates Health Institute, a licensed massage establishment popular with Canadians battling serious illness.

Clement, who went by the title "Dr." [claimed to teach people to "heal themselves"](#) from cancer by eating raw, organic vegetables and having a positive attitude.

"We've had more people reverse cancer than any institute in the history of health care," he said in a video obtained by CBC News.

"So when McGill fails or Toronto hospital fails, they come to us. Stage four [cancer], and they reverse it."

CBC had also reported in the fall that 11-year-old Makayla Sault of the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation in Ontario attended the spa months after quitting chemotherapy at McMaster Children's Hospital in Hamilton against doctors' advice.

Makayla died in January, having suffered a relapse of her leukemia. Her family claims her death was due to damage caused by chemotherapy, whereas the McMaster doctors who treated her say no one is ever known to have survived her type of cancer without chemotherapy.

Her death is currently being investigated by Ontario's coroner's office.

J.J., another 11-year-old girl battling leukemia, also left chemotherapy to attend Hippocrates last summer against doctors' advice. CBC can't reveal her identity because of a publication ban.

Her mother said she was convinced to abandon chemotherapy after speaking with Brian Clement. "By him saying, 'Oh, yes, no problem, we can help her,' that's the day I stopped the chemo."



J.J., an 11-year-old battling leukemia, left chemotherapy to go to the Hippocrates Health Institute, a health spa in Florida. (CBC)

Clement denies having said that to the girl's mother.

The complaint against Anna Maria Clement was filed by Steven Pugh, a nurse who used to work at the Hippocrates Health Institute. He alleges he was fired last year after raising concerns about unlicensed and unethical practices by the Clements.

Pugh says he also filed a formal complaint about Brian Clement with Florida's Department of Health.

When contacted about the status of the complaint, the department said it "can neither confirm nor deny the existence of a complaint or investigation until 10 days after probable cause is found."



Pugh told CBC News he spoke with a prosecutor this week and was given every indication that the state's investigation is ongoing.

He says the Department of Health also sent him a letter on March 3, indicating its investigation into his complaint could take months to complete.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/aboriginal/hippocrates-health-spa-attended-by-aboriginal-girls-refusing-chemo-sees-fine-cancelled-1.3001291>

## Aboriginal Identity & Representation

### Police chief salutes aboriginal elders

By Betty Ann Adam, The StarPhoenix March 14, 2015



Chief Clive Weighill (right) gave commemorative police badges to a group of aboriginal elders, like Edward Bighead, for their ongoing relationship with the community and the police, March 13, 2015 in Saskatoon.

When Cree elder Maria Linklater was asked to join an advisory committee to the Saskatoon chief of police more than 20 years ago, she wanted police leaders to understand the history of indigenous people that has led to so many of them coming into conflict with the law.

Indian residential schools played a large role in the problems police see now, she said. Many people separated from their parents didn't know how to be parents when it was their turn.

"We've lost our way through the residential schools and non-native people not understanding us. It's time now they should do everything they can to learn about us," she said.



“We advise them to understand us, where we come from. We are warrior people. We’re not only survivors or victims. We’re strong people,” she said.

Linklater and her husband, Walter Linklater, were among 16 people to receive honorary police badges from police Chief Clive Weighill at a ceremony Friday.

“The committee gives me an opportunity to talk to people who really have their fingers into the community and understand the First Nations and Metis culture,” Weighill said.

“I don’t think elders in the community receive as much recognition as they deserve. Not only are we giving them badges as recognition, but they work in the community, they work with youth, they help people with the courts, they give people advice.

“There’s so much work that’s done by the aboriginal elders and I don’t think they get recognized for a lot of their work.”

Walter Linklater said elders wanted police to understand that indigenous people had their own culture and spiritual way, and it was their foundation for living.

“We encouraged them to get elders to come and to smudge, to pray with us and sweat with us and take part in the ceremonies so they would have a better understanding of our way and our people,” he said.

“We see a great improvement in the attitudes of the police department towards First Nations people.”

About 58 of the Saskatoon Police Service’s 450 officers are aboriginal. They represent about 12 per cent of the officers in a city with an aboriginal population of about 13 or 14 per cent. Weighill said he’d like the force to have 16 or 18 per cent aboriginal officers.

**Direct Link:**

<http://www.thestarphoenix.com/life/Police+chief+salutes+aboriginal+elders/10888476/story.html>

## **Traditional indigenous parenting class in Winnipeg helps reclaim identity**

**'A lot of the teachings are about learning to find your own voice,' says facilitator**

By Angela Johnston, [CBC News](#) Posted: Mar 14, 2015 4:00 AM CT Last Updated: Mar 14, 2015 6:08 PM CT

Each class starts with a sage smudge, and a check-in with women around the circle.

There are about a dozen women seated around a table in the William Whyte Community School family room. One woman tells the group she is about to have a baby. Another is going back to school after 25 years.

These women are not hitting the books in this North End school. They are here to learn how to parent from a traditional indigenous perspective and gain a sense of empowerment.

"We're mothers first and foremost," says facilitator Ko'ona Cochrane. "We know how to parent our children."



Class participants listen to Ko'ona Cochrane discuss the seven sacred teachings in a traditional parenting class. (CBC)

Cochrane has been teaching this weekly class for almost a year to parents at the school.

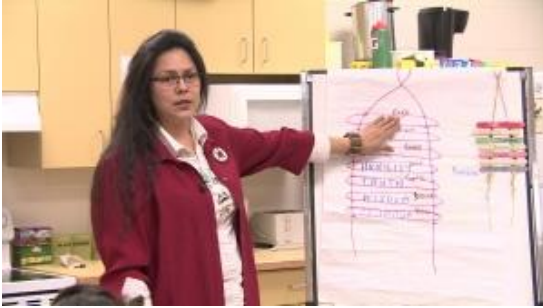
"We're trying to reclaim our cultural teachings and provide those teachings back to the parents to empower them and let them know that they already know how to be parents," she says.

This day's lesson centres around the seven sacred teachings.

"So the first teaching we have up here today is love," says Cochrane. She describes a story about an eagle searching for goodness in people and coming upon a woman praying and offering tobacco.

The women start crafting a wall hanging made of popsicle sticks and beads with the teachings of love, respect, honesty, humility, truth, wisdom and courage while Cochrane sings and drums.

"I really enjoy when we smudge and Ko'ona sings and drums," says Jessica Bird, whose son just turned four, "It seems to calm me down."



Indigenous community facilitator Ko'ona Cochrane discusses the seven sacred teachings at a traditional parenting class. (CBC)

Bird started coming to the class last year.

"I wanted to get back into the culture when my grandmother died and my sister passed away. I felt the need to go back to the roots for our family," she said.

Bird says her son will be a traditional dancer and hopes these teachings keep him on the right path.

"I really do hope that he passes it on or even continues in his teenage years to keep him out of the bad lifestyle that is so common nowadays in young children," said Bird.



Participants in the traditional indigenous parenting class make a wall hanging with the seven sacred teachings. (CBC)

Cochrane says the topics in the class are parent-driven - parents tell her what they want to know about. Topics have included medicine picking, smudging, communicating with a talking stick and teepee teachings.

"A lot of the teachings are about learning to find your own voice and to honour yourself," she said.

This hands-on, community approach is something officials in Manitoba's child welfare system support.

"The stronger families are, the fewer children will end up in care," said Bobbi Pompana, CEO of the Southern First Nations Network of Care, ""We know there needs to be more family-based programming."



Jessica Bird hopes her 4-year-old son can pass along traditional indigenous parenting teachings to his own children someday. (CBC)

"Cultural appropriateness is really important. Family connection is really important, so the spirit of that is the direction we need to go," she said.

One recommendation in the 2012 interim report of Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission also calls for governments to "develop culturally appropriate early childhood and parenting programs."

Lisa Chatkana recently moved to Winnipeg with her two daughters. She sees the class as a way to meet people but also reflect.



Bobbi Pampana, CEO of the Southern First Nations Network of Care says the stronger families are, the fewer children will end up in care. (CBC)

"Growing up I never got taught these teachings," she said, "I was always in different foster homes as I was growing up... I learned them by my grandma when I finally went back home."

She hopes her two daughters have a different experience.

"I look at my girls...just feeling proud of who I am and where I come from," she said.

Cochrane currently teaches classes in three different locations. Participants include parents - indigenous and non-indigenous, Child and Family Services workers and even grandparents.

"It's so exciting to see these older people who have lost out because of residential school and colonialism on these teachings. They want to learn them so they come to these circles," she said. "They themselves are empowered, because they already know a lot. They just don't get validated."



Lisa Chatkana works on a wall hanging craft in a traditional parenting class.

She says people who have not been raised in a traditional way may not recognize the calming effect of smudging or the power of a hand drum.

Cochrane says she wants class participants to know these tools can help them.

"They're realizing these are tools that are making them feel better and helping them to cope within their homes, the stresses in their home," she said.

"There's just so many that are learning other ways that aren't healthy," she said, "It's a matter of people standing up and re-learning these teachings."

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/traditional-indigenous-parenting-class-in-winnipeg-helps-reclaim-identity-1.2994460>

# Light-skinned indigenous people face discrimination: Michelle Lovegrove

**Aboriginal Australian is from Ngarrindjeri Nation and produces national radio show *Living Black***

By GP Mendoza, [for CBC News](#) Posted: Mar 15, 2015 5:00 AM ET Last Updated: Mar 15, 2015 5:00 AM ET



'Judging aboriginal people by their skin colour - whether light or dark - is wrong,' says Australian journalist Michelle Lovegrove. (GP Mendoza)

Judging aboriginal people by their skin colour — whether light or dark — is wrong, asserted an indigenous Australian broadcast journalist in a public talk last week at the University of British Columbia.

"Australia has this obsession with colour and still does. It started quite early in colonization days," said Michelle Aleksandrovics Lovegrove.

Lovegrove, who is from the Ngarrindjeri Nation, produces a national indigenous radio program called *Living Black*. (Aboriginal people in Australia call themselves black.)

In her talk, entitled *But You Don't Look Aboriginal*, Lovegrove gave multiple examples of how aboriginal people with light skin are faced with discrimination in Australia.

## Light-skinned discrimination

"Over the last few years, there have been a number of cases that have played out quite publicly in Australian media about who or who is not an aboriginal person."

Most controversial were two commentaries by journalist Andrew Bolt published in 2009.

In the articles, Bolt picked apart the credentials and motivations of 16 prominent Australian aboriginal professionals — a group which included academics, writers, and lawyers — suggesting they'd chosen to emphasize their aboriginal racial identities to further their careers.



"He claimed all of these people were only saying they were aboriginal to get benefits and were using some minuscule element of aboriginality to do so," said Lovegrove.

"The one thing they had in common is they were all light-skinned."

'Being aboriginal is based on family, lineage, connection, and recognition by family and community'- *Michelle Lovegrove, Australian broadcast journalist*

Nine of the 16 people named in the articles took Bolt to court, arguing he had contravened Australia's Racial Discrimination Act. They won.

"Being aboriginal is based on family, lineage, connection, and recognition by family and community," said Lovegrove.

"Governments and other bodies should have no role in determining who is — or who is not — aboriginal."

However, Aleksandrovcis Lovegrove maintained prejudice remains deeply ingrained in Australian culture.

"The myth in Australia is what became famously known as the noble savage," she said.

"Dark skin, tribal markings, holding a spear. That noble savage still seems to permeate a lot of Australia as an undercurrent. If you are not like that man, you're not aboriginal."

## **'Authentic' First Nations**

Alden Habacon, director of Intercultural Understanding at UBC, thinks that many Canadians often make similar mistakes.

'You can't tell people's indigeneity from their appearance. If you go about it that way, you're bound to make a mistake.'- *Alden Habacon, director of Intercultural Understanding at UBC*

"You can't tell people's indigeneity from their appearance," said Habacon.

"If you go about it that way, you're bound to make a mistake. It is much more nuanced than that; the history's so layered, and there's so much diversity in indigeneity."

Sheryl Lightfoot, an Anishinaabe and Canada Research Chair of Global Indigenous Rights & Politics at UBC, says racism in Canada is tied more to socioeconomic class than skin colour.

"Many First Nations here still feel [racism] on a daily basis," said Lightfoot.

"In Canada, there's this assumption that if you're "authentic" First Nations, you live on reserve, you aren't well educated, and you're of lower social status. But, that's not the case at all."

## Attempted assimilation

Lovegrove maintains these prejudices in Australia date back to early days of colonization, when the pattern of attempted assimilation was similar to Canada.

"The lighter you were, the more likely it was that you would be taken. If you had a European mix, you were redeemable for assimilation." - *Michelle Lovegrove*

"In Canada, you had residential schools. In Australia, we call them stolen generations: the children taken from their families and communities and put into orphanages," she continued.

Up to 100,000 aboriginal children in Australia were taken from their families and placed in homes run by European families and "orphanages," where abuse was common. Newborns were often selected for assimilation based on the colour of their skin.

Aleksandrovcis Lovegrove said nurses would carry around a swatch of colours with different skin tones.

"The lighter you were, the more likely it was that you would be taken," she said. "If you had a European mix, you were redeemable for assimilation."

Lovegrove believes the Australian experience can help Canadians grapple with contemporary indigenous identities.

In her office, she points to an article addressing myths and facts about First Nations in Canada. In the myth section are phrases such as, "All aboriginals don't pay taxes," and "All aboriginals get a free university education."

"It's quite astounding," she said. "All I need to do is change some words and it would apply to Australia."

*GP Mendoza is a journalist from Vancouver, British Columbia. He has reported on mental illness in West Africa; Vancouver arts and culture; and child welfare in aboriginal communities. He is finishing his Master's degree at the UBC Graduate School of Journalism in 2015.*

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/aboriginal/light-skinned-indigenous-people-face-discrimination-michelle-lovegrove-1.2989480>



# University of Alberta Teepee Vandalism Causes Fear In Indigenous Community

[ICTMN Staff](#)

3/15/15

Over the weekend of March 7 to 8, teepee poles erected by the University of Alberta's Faculty of Native Studies were vandalized with toilet paper and vinyl flag tape.

The teepee had been up as part of a memorial that said "Justice for our Sisters" from February 10 to March 6 to bring awareness to murdered and missing aboriginal women, children and two spirit persons.



The vandalized teepee poles held a memorial to missing and murdered aboriginal women from February 10 to March 6. (Courtesy)

The vandalism "has caused indigenous and non-indigenous students, staff and faculty hurt, fear and discomfort," Dean Brendan Hokowhitu said in a written statement.

The teepee poles and the surrounding space are a sacred area where people gather. Faculty condemned the vandalism and urged the perpetrators to come forward.

"This disrespectful and ignorant behaviour cannot be tolerated on this campus, regardless of the motivation," said University of Alberta president Indira Samarasekera. "The

university stands in support of our indigenous students, faculty and staff. We value diversity, inclusion and safe spaces for all members of our community.”

Campus protective services and Edmonton Police Service have both been notified and are conducting an investigation.

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2015/03/15/university-alberta-teepee-vandalism-causes-fear-indigenous-community-159606>

## First Nation Activists Heckled with Racial Slurs at Stop C-51 Rally

By  
[Krystalline Kraus](#)  
| March 19, 2015



### First Nation Activists Heckled with Racial Slurs at Stop C-51 Rally

This is a story I wish I didn't have to write. I've had to actually wait this long to calm down enough to be able to see a computer screen that is not red.

As many of you know, there were 55 actions across Canada last Saturday March 14 to demonstrate against Bill C-41. This is awesome!

Now unfortunately I have to talk to you about something not so awesome.

I first want to explain something here about activist protocol. For a few years now in Toronto, we have had a general protocol that the space at very front of the march is reserved for First Nations and their allies. This includes their colour guard (flags), drummers, singers and dancers.

Keeping this space is important for a few reasons.

For one, holding that space is important to show respect for the original people of Turtle Island.

Another good reason to keep this space open, free from large banners, etc., is to provide room for the dancers to swirl and drummers and singers to hear each other and keep eye contact with one another to communicate who will sing lead.

While this was a learning curve for many, it took the strength and leadership of No One Is Illegal on May Day three years ago to put this into action. On that May Day, there were a lot of enthusiastic communists who very proudly wished to feel like the leader of the proletariat, even for the afternoon, to lead the march. Ironically, they even try to mimic the hair and beard of their favourite vanguardian.

With this said, I know there were a lot of newer activists and concerned citizens who came out on Saturday to demonstrate against Bill C-51, and with two thousand people rallying in Toronto, I would like to think that perhaps the message didn't get across regarding how important it was to keep the front of the march open for the drummers, singers, flagbearers and dancers.

A few racist quips were made when people were being politely told to take themselves and their banner behind the drummers. Of course I want to believe that this was just a mis-understanding or a lack of communication.

Still, it was an uncomfortable moment for the First Nations community members who were trying to hold that space, and tiring for the march organizers and the community members themselves to keep reminding the same people over and over again.

This act of holding space follows along the principles of Step Up to Step Back, which boils down to having an secure understanding of your identity and what privilege that goes with it that you can 'step up' (put yourself out there and volunteer) to 'step back' (allow someone who would usually, socially, economically or politically, be relegated to the background to find their voice and express themselves).

No, having Indigenous community members lead the march does not mean they are taking over or organizing boats to send people back to where-ever.

No, it does not mean that your solidarity is not important or wasted.

No, it doesn't mean that anyone will be burning the Canadian flag – or specifically the Canadian flag you happen to be carrying – in the next five minutes.

Holding space for others is an act of solidarity in that it acknowledges the relationship between two diverse groups in a politically and socio-economically realistic way.

Above all else, it is a radical act of love.

I hope my note clarifies things.

**Direct Link:** <http://rabble.ca/blogs/bloggers/krystalline-kraus/2015/03/first-nation-activists-heckled-racial-slurs-stop-c-51-rally>

## Aboriginal Inequality & Poverty

### Vancouver residents invite Pope Francis to tour Downtown Eastside and First Nations reserves

[Jeff Lee, Postmedia News](#) | March 16, 2015 2:00 AM ET



Pope Francis leaves at the end of a penitential ceremony on March 13, 2015 at St Peter's basilica in Vatican.

Vancouver — A group of Vancouver residents representing a broad range of faiths has invited Pope Francis to tour the Downtown Eastside and two First Nations reserves.

The unusual request involves members of the Jewish, Muslim, First Nations, Anglican, Catholic and United Church communities, who believe Pope Francis could spur real change in the welfare of the city and province's poor and homeless.

The invitation has received the endorsement and support of both the Catholic Archdiocese and the Anglican Diocese, who agreed to deliver the written message directly to the Pope through Vatican emissaries in addition to a couriered invitation that the group delivered to the Vatican's front door.

The effort to get the Pope to Vancouver is not being organized by the churches themselves. Instead, it is the brainchild of Vancouver lawyer Tom Beasley, who said he was motivated after seeing virtually no change over a decade of travelling through and walking in the Downtown Eastside.

I have travelled through the Downtown Eastside daily on a bus for 25 years, and I don't see change

He enlisted the support of a friend, former City of Vancouver homeless advocate Judy Graves, and members of faith communities. The group believes the Pope — who has made helping the marginalized a major plank in his administration — will respond to the invitation positively.

"I have travelled through the Downtown Eastside daily on a bus for 25 years, and I don't see change. In fact, I see things worsening," said Mr. Beasley, who is a member of the United Church. "It would appear that the organizations, governments of various levels and those who care about the Downtown Eastside have struggled and have not found solutions."

Mr. Beasley said he saw in Pope Francis an opportunity to bring focus to the issue of homelessness and despair, not just in Vancouver but elsewhere.

"I have watched with great interest and amazement as a non-Catholic person the grace and humility, but focus, that the current Pope Francis gives to the marginalized," he said.

Ms. Graves, who calls herself an "Anglo-Catholic," said she was captivated by Mr. Beasley's idea. She has watched, equally, as efforts have often failed in the Downtown Eastside, and she believes a lot of this is because the solutions do not reach into what she believes is the real problem.

"I believe that this visit is necessary because overwhelmingly, the depths of poverty and homelessness are a spiritual problem. It is a spiritual problem of people who have wealth and power," she said. "It is caused by greed and by disdain of the poor and every time that we see a person thought less of, that person's life is shortened."

Ms. Graves believes that a visit by Pope Francis would change not the disenfranchised of the Downtown Eastside and First Nations reserves, but those with wealth and power who can make a difference.

"I think it is everybody's job to minister to the poor. I think where the Pope has particular influence is being able to minister to the rich and the powerful. They need the ministry most," she said.

I think where the Pope has particular influence is being able to minister to the rich and the powerful. They need the ministry most

Mr. Beasley and Ms. Graves have received powerful support from other faiths, as well. In late February, the signatories — including members of First Nations communities, Muslim and Jewish faiths, the Anglican, Catholic, United Church and Alliance Church of Canada — gathered at St. James Anglican Church in the heart of the Downtown Eastside. There, watched by Father Matthew Johnson and Peter Elliott, the dean of Christ Church Cathedral, eight people signed the letter.

“Vancouver is one of the world’s most beautiful cities with much wealth — yet its urban core [the Downtown Eastside] has large growing numbers of persons who are homeless and who have mental disabilities. Many are indigenous peoples from remote reserves, often from communities of great despair. Our governments, churches and social agencies have not struggled hard enough to find solutions,” the letter states.

“Your presence and message will bring a spotlight internationally to those concerns and we are confident will start a dialogue towards resolution through engaged leadership from residents, governments, churches and social agencies. Ideally that visit would occur in the months of May to September, perhaps when you are next in North America.”

The group specifically invited the Pope to walk the Downtown Eastside and engage in discussions and break bread with residents and others; visit an urban and remote reserve in Canada, and celebrate a mass from a barge in English Bay “surrounded by indigenous canoes.”

They also are asking for an act of reconciliation between indigenous peoples and Christians by inviting the Pope to be transported to the barge by one of those canoes.

**Direct Link:** <http://news.nationalpost.com/2015/03/16/vancouver-residents-invite-pope-francis-to-tour-downtown-eastside-and-first-nations-reserves/>

## **Aboriginal Jobs & Labour**

### **Aboriginal job seekers in Sask. feel unemployment crunch**

**The unemployment rate rose to 5.5 per cent in February 2015 from 4.1 per cent the year prior**

[CBC News](#) Posted: Mar 15, 2015 2:36 PM CT Last Updated: Mar 15, 2015 2:36 PM CT



The unemployment rate in Saskatchewan has gone up 1.4 per cent over the past year, according to the Government of Saskatchewan's statistics bureau. (CBC)

A rise in the unemployment rate in Saskatchewan is hitting some aboriginal job seekers especially hard.

Chris Bailey of the Regina Work Preparation Centre says his organization seeks to address barriers aboriginal people may face when looking for work.

"Housing can be a huge issue," Bailey said. "It's very hard to get an appointment for a job if you don't have a telephone and it's hard to have a telephone if you don't have a house."

He also said that the centre offers programs to improve skills when it comes to interviewing and resumé writing.

According to the Statistics Canada, the province's unemployment rate went up to 5.5 per cent from 4.1 per cent last year.

Similar to other resource-dependent provinces, the fall in oil prices could contribute to the declining employment rates.

However, Statistics Canada's monthly labour force survey states that Saskatchewan still has the lowest unemployment rate in the country.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatchewan/aboriginal-job-seekers-in-sask-feel-unemployment-crunch-1.2996070>

## **Alberta government giving \$1M to Aboriginal Construction Career Centres pilot program**

By [Matt Dykstra](#), *Edmonton Sun*

First posted: Tuesday, March 17, 2015 04:23 PM MDT





The Alberta government is giving \$1 million to a pilot program at Edmonton's Norquest College and Calgary's Bow Valley College that aims to support aboriginal students in entering the construction industry.

At Norquest College's downtown campus in Edmonton on Tuesday, Premier Jim Prentice said he believes the new Alberta Aboriginal Construction Career Centres pilot will see "enormous success" as aboriginal students receive employment training, job coaching and counselling in entering the construction trades at both colleges.

"What this centre does is ensure there are meaningful opportunities for First Nation and aboriginal Albertans to get the skills training and the job placements and be an equal part of that economy," said Prentice, noting construction isn't slowing down in the province despite the string of layoffs resulting from low oil prices.

"There's a lot of investment in and around the oilsands that will continue. In addition, it's important in these difficult times that we maintain our commitment to build social capital, schools, hospitals and the like. We'll continue to see significant government investment in these types of facilities."

The government is contributing \$1 million to the pilot, with an additional \$525,000 from the two colleges and \$750,000 from industry and aboriginal stakeholders.

The program aims to provide construction-related jobs for over 300 registrants during its two-year pilot. A website for the program was launched Tuesday.

"Can you imagine being an Albertan with a desire to contribute to the community but also with a feeling that you've been left behind because of differences in cultural ideals and understanding?" asked Norquest president and CEO Jodi Abbott.

"Today we offer hope and incredible opportunity."

Prentice noted that he attended a First Nations education summit in the city last week and found the difference in educational outcomes between aboriginal communities and the rest of Alberta "completely unacceptable."



"It's one of the things that concerns me the most as the Premier. We are going to push and pull in every manner possible to make sure that First Nation and aboriginal Albertans get the educational opportunities that they need, get the skills training that they need, so they can take part in the economy."

**Direct Link:** <http://www.edmontonsun.com/2015/03/17/alberta-government-giving-1m-to-aboriginal-construction-career-centres-pilot-program>

## Federal funding to help aboriginal people access training and jobs

[Molly Gibson Kirby](#) / Thompson Citizen  
March 18, 2015 02:07 PM



Shelly Glover, minister of Canadian heritage and official languages left, stands beside Thompson Mayor Dennis Fenske during a March 17 announcement that the federal government will be providing Thompson with \$268,264 from the Urban Partnerships program. Photograph By Molly Gibson Kirby

The federal government is spending more than a quarter of a million dollars over two years to provide aboriginal people in Thompson education and training in hopes of bettering their access to local jobs.

Shelly Glover, minister of Canadian heritage and official languages, announced the funding at City Hall March 17 on behalf of Bernard Valcourt, minister of aboriginal affairs and northern development.

"I am here to announce on behalf of the government of Canada more than \$268,000 in new funding support for the City of Thompson's efforts in partnership with the Thompson Economic Development Working Group, and the Thompson Urban Aboriginal Strategy Steering Committee," Glover said, noting that the need is high in Thompson.

According to the 2011 census, 56 per cent of all aboriginal people in Canada live in an urban area, and 35.2 per cent of Thompson's population – 4,475 people – declared an aboriginal identity. "This new funding is through the Urban Aboriginal Strategy's urban partnerships program which seeks to address barriers to employment and to improve long term employment opportunities in the local economy for urban aboriginal people."

This money, Glover says, will help offer culturally appropriate educational programming and skills training to ensure participants are prepared to participate fully in Canada's growing economy.

"Our government is proud to support projects that allow aboriginal people to take advantage of our country's economic prosperity. Supporting measures that help create jobs and encourage aboriginal participation in the economy is key to a more prosperous and vibrant Canada," Valcourt said in a press release.

Recently the federal government updated its Urban Aboriginal Strategy, Glover said, to help respond to local priorities like job training and skills development. "We consolidated four programs into two, to reduce administrative costs, which will make available more money for the organizations. At the same time, these changes reflect the important role played by aboriginal organizations to promote community engagement and it will provide greater support for the national association of friendship centres."

The government will be providing friendship centres with \$43 million over two years, and the money will go to delivering funding to groups who will use it for employment opportunities and skills training.

Mayor Dennis Fenske says this is a great thing for Thompson and Northern Manitoba. "We know that the capabilities and abilities for people in the north, we are a community of opportunity and not everyone has the same opportunity. This is a tool that we will use to make sure everyone has a fair chance to make the most of their opportunities as they arise."

He went on to praise the partnerships that made this happen. "It's through partnerships, with yourselves [the federal government], Ma-Mow-We-Tak Friendship Centre and others that will certainly make this well-known, and we will share our success story with others, because that's how things grow."

- See more at: <http://www.thompsoncitizen.net/news/thompson/federal-funding-to-help-aboriginal-people-access-training-and-jobs-1.1796874#sthash.0QNtGpb6.dpuf>

## **Aboriginal Politics**

# Challenging industry and government relationships set tone at Métis conference

By [Vincent McDermott](#)

Thursday, March 12, 2015 4:00:34 MDT PM



CRDAC executive director Jeffrey O'Donnell and McMurray Métis general manager Kyle Harrietha pictured at a panel during a conference on Métis rights. VINCENT MCDERMOTT/TODAY STAFF

If an oilsands company does not want to meet with a Métis community to discuss an energy project, the McMurray Métis promises that company will not have an easy time developing that area.

During the two-day Métis Rights & Economic Development Symposium at the Sawridge Inn & Conference Centre, McMurray Métis general manager Kyle Harrietha used his local's ongoing dispute with Canadian Natural Resources Ltd. to demonstrate the difficult legal challenges awaiting industry if Métis communities are not consulted.

"To both industry and government, I'll say the following: it is crystal clear that there is a duty to consult and accommodate with Métis communities," said Harrietha.

"I can only speak for McMurray Métis when I say that those in industry and government who refuse to acknowledge and honour those facts that the relationship with us will always be difficult," he said. "I can assure you that you will eventually be forced to do so through litigation."

CNRL has been given approval to begin [test drilling several areas near Gregoire Lake Provincial Park](#) and close to the boundaries of the municipality's Urban Development Sub-Region. The province has denied the Métis the opportunity to challenge the exploratory project, but Harrietha implied the Métis have not exhausted their strategies.

Harrietha said the McMurray Métis will file statements of claim and applications on every single CNRL application within the community's historical traditional territory, as well as judicial reviews of proposals. And they will not turn down any opportunity to cite the company's performance publicly or during regulatory reviews.

"In all recent interactions, they've been addressing the Métis and First Nations through lawyers," he said. "That's always a bad sign."

Harrietha then chastized the company's safety record, pointing out a year-long incident [near Cold Lake that saw bitumen bubble to the surface at an uncontrollable rate](#). In late 2014, the company allowed benzine to leak into a freshwater aquifer. Overall, CNRL had the most spills in Alberta for 2014.

"Our organization has almost always been able to work out settlements from industry," he said, listing Cenovus and Shell as companies the local has built positive relationships with. "This is what it looks like and sounds like when a relationship goes the other way."

The two-day conference, which concluded Wednesday afternoon, featured speakers from across Canada's Métis Nation. The conference included panels on entrepreneurship and history, but topics related to industry and government relations dominated the conference.

Jeffrey O'Donnell, executive director of the Conklin Resource Development Advisory Committee, spoke warmly of their relationship with Cenovus, who operate the Christina Lake facility nearby. [When a tank at the site caught fire last may](#), the community and media were alerted within hours of the incident.

"That is how you build a long-term relationship. When you have developed trust, topics of this nature become easier to broach," he said. "There's a consensus that the community wants industry to prosper in conjunction with the community, but not at the expense of the community and its culture."

Media had been alerted, meaning the mostly Métis population of Conklin were also being informed of the incident. Leadership had been updated by the company. Emergency crews were on the ground and an injured worker had been hastily transported to the Northern Lights Regional Health Centre.

O'Donnell and Harrietha were speaking at a panel called Industry and Government Relations Panel, joined by Greg Fagan, operations director at Cenovus' Christina Lake site, and Jawad Malik, CAO for the McKay Métis Community.

"Each party has something to gain and something to lose," said Fagan. "Experiences lead to your beliefs and your beliefs lead to the behaviours you have."

O'Donnell spoke of the challenges urban hamlets in the municipality face. Even though the municipality "enjoys the lion's share" of taxes from industry sites in rural areas,

Conklin still has no running water or sewage services, forcing the mostly Métis community to ration their water.

“You have to think ‘I need two minutes in the shower so the tank is still full,’ but you also have to worry about the five other people who need a shower and enough water to do the dishes,” he said.

There is also no local RCMP detachment, no nursing station and no bylaw services, although the planned Conklin multiplex centre has space planned for these services.

“These are essential services that currently don’t exist in Conklin,” he said. “I see the light at the end of the tunnel and I’m very cautiously optimistic about the future of Conklin.”

**Direct Link:** <http://www.fortmcmurraytoday.com/2015/03/12/challenging-industry-and-government-relationships-set-tone-at-metis-conference>

## North Vancouver NDP pick First Nations activist

[Brent Richter](#) / North Shore News  
March 13, 2015 05:12 PM



Carleen Thomas. Photo supplied

North Vancouver federal NDP members have selected a First Nations activist on the forefront of the pipeline battle to run in this fall’s election.

NDPers acclaimed Carleen Thomas, who works for the Tsleil-Waututh Nation’s Sacred Trust Initiative, at a nomination meeting held on Saturday. The initiative was set up specifically to oppose Kinder Morgan’s application to expand its pipeline to Burrard Inlet.

Thomas said that was what motivated her to run.

“A lot of people would ask me what they could do to support us and I’d say ‘Contact your elected officials – your MLA and your MP,’” she said. “I guess some people heard me say that and they asked if I’d consider running in the federal election. We’ve always been NDP so I explored it, chatted it over with my family and decided to go for it.”

While she supports the NDP’s call for increasing the minimum wage and a national \$15-per day childcare program, Thomas said she hopes to change the way important decisions are made in Canada.

“I think really it’s bringing huge decisions back to a grassroots level. In our experience with working on the Sacred Trust Initiative, there’s just so many things that are happening without people understanding the consequences or ramifications of what will be affecting them in their own communities,” she said.

Thomas will face incumbent Conservative MP Andrew Saxton and Liberal challenger Jonathan Wilkinson on the ballot.

North Vancouver Green Party members have not set a nomination meeting date yet.

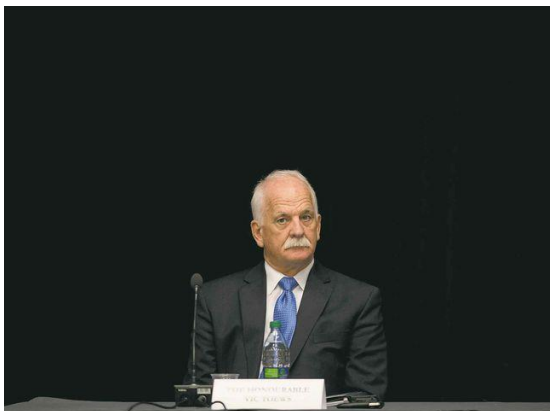
See more at: <http://www.nsnews.com/news/north-vancouver-ndp-pick-first-nations-activist-1.1792536#sthash.WRH03HQ1.dpuf>

## **Ex-MP's lobbying scrutinized**

### **Months of work for Peguis First Nation under microscope**

By: Mia Rabson

Posted: 03/14/2015 3:00 AM



Vic Toews, who was a federal Tory minister, lobbied the Manitoba government on behalf of a First Nation after leaving politics and before becoming a judge.

OTTAWA -- The federal ethics commissioner has been asked to investigate whether former senior Manitoba cabinet minister Vic Toews broke the Conflict of Interest Act when he took on lobbying work after he left office in 2013.

NDP MP Pat Martin wrote to Mary Dawson Friday. He wants her to look into Toews' lobbying of the Manitoba government on behalf of the Peguis First Nation through its lawyer during the eight months between his departure from cabinet and his appointment to the Court of Queen's Bench.

"I think the conflict-of-interest commissioner should come down like a ton of bricks on this particular minister, and they should tighten things up for the future," Martin said Friday.

"You're not supposed to, you know, go shopping around as soon as you're finished and look up these old clients, you know, for some quid pro quo.

"That's the appearance here if these allegations are true."

In the fall of 2013, Toews registered with the provincial lobbyist registry to lobby the provincial government on behalf of four clients: Norway House Cree Nation, Whitesand River Group, the Metis Economic Development Organization and lawyer Jeffrey Rath.

'I think the conflict-of-interest commissioner should come down like a ton of bricks on this particular minister, and they should tighten things up for the future' — Winnipeg NDP MP Pat Martin

Rath has represented Peguis on a number of files, including the Kapyong Barracks land dispute with the federal government and the joint venture between Peguis and the Manitoba Jockey Club to build a hotel and conference centre at Assiniboia Downs.

As the senior minister for Manitoba from 2006 to 2013, Toews was the lead in negotiations between Ottawa and Treaty One First Nations, including Peguis, over the Kapyong Barracks site on Kenaston Boulevard.

The Assiniboia Downs project was a provincial matter in which Toews would not have been involved.

In 2013 and 2014, Toews lobbied for the Downs project with both Anna Rothney -- then the head of the provincial cabinet's influential planning and priorities committee and a key adviser to Premier Greg Selinger -- and Liam Martin.

Martin, who is Pat Martin's son, was Selinger's chief of staff at the time.

Documents obtained by the Free Press from court files involving lawsuits between Peguis and Rath, who have parted company, show a numbered company owned by Toews' wife, Stacey Meek, was paid \$966,000 from the Peguis lawyer's trust for "strategic advice."



There is no date on the transactions.

Rath told the Free Press Friday those entries are a mistake, and the payments were made to a different company.

He said he is working to get the records corrected.

Meek told the National Post this week her company never received nearly that amount, that it was paid \$50,000 for work it did for Rath, and it never did any work for Peguis.

Neither Meek nor Toews responded to a Free Press request for comment Friday.

Pat Martin said it wouldn't matter how much the company was paid: If Toews was lobbying for Peguis, that should be considered a violation of the Conflict of Interest Act for cabinet ministers.

"She says it was no more than \$50,000, tops," Martin said in question period Friday. "As if that makes it OK."

His letter to the ethics commissioner asks her to determine if Toews had direct dealings with Peguis during his last year in office and whether his post-employment dealings with Peguis broke the law.

Although the act does not bar former cabinet ministers from lobbying provincial governments (it does prohibit lobbying the federal government) during the two-year post-employment cooling-off period, it does place restrictions on their activities.

Former cabinet ministers are prevented from doing anything that takes "improper advantage" of their previous office, acting on behalf of a person or organization connected to any issues dealt with as a cabinet minister and providing advice to clients using information acquired while in cabinet and that is not available to the general public.

"As the senior minister, I don't see how you could find a client that you didn't connect with as minister in some way," Pat Martin said.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/local/ex-mps-lobbying-scrutinized-296306231.html>

## **Inuit org rejects mediation in election ballot dispute**

## **Redfern seeks new byelection in December 2015**

THOMAS ROHNER, March 17, 2015 - 9:10 am





Justice Beverly Browne of the Alberta Court of Queen's Bench, who now serves as a deputy judge for the Nunavut court, will rule later on the admissibility of ballots and other documents used in Ottawa for the Qikiqtani Inuit Association's elections this past December. (FILE PHOTO)

**(Corrected March 17, 11:30 p.m.)**

Lawyers representing the Qikiqtani Inuit Association and Iqaluit resident Madeleine Redfern didn't make much headway in court March 13 as they continued to wrangle over what documents the Inuit organization must share with Redfern's lawyer.

Redfern, who lost the Iqaluit community director election by one vote this past Dec. 8, has applied to the Nunavut Court of Justice to have the election result quashed on the grounds that the QIA prevented eligible voters from casting ballots.

Now, Redfern says she's frustrated that the QIA and its lawyer have rejected an offer to resolve the dispute through mediation.

"I instructed my lawyers to offer [the] QIA the opportunity to mediate the matter," Redfern said in an emailed statement March 13.

"[The] QIA rejected my proposal for mediation."

Mediation would have saved both sides a lot of money, but instead, the QIA seems intent on driving up legal costs, Redfern said.

"It's an unreasonable and outrageous approach," Redfern said in her statement.

"I find this heavy-handed and not in keeping with Inuit values, regarding respect, mediation and ultimately reconciliation that is mutually beneficial for all affected."

When contacted by *Nunatsiaq News*, the QIA said it could not comment on any aspect of the civil matter while it's before the court.

And QIA lawyer Sylvie Molgat, on holiday until March 23, could not be reached for comment.

[The disagreement](#) focuses on seven boxes of documents QIA produced in response to Redfern's judicial application, filed Jan. 7.

Molgat argued before Justice Beverly Browne March 9 and again March 13 that only documents relating to the election result that Redfern contests — the Iqaluit community director position — should be turned over to Redfern's lawyer, Teresa Haykowsky.

That would exclude any documents relating to the two Ottawa polling stations set up by the QIA on Dec. 8.

That's where eligible Qikiqtani voters could cast ballots for QIA president, but not for community director positions.

"QIA is not seeking to hide anything," Molgat told Browne March 13.

But Haykowsky said the QIA discriminated against eligible Qikiqtani voters in Ottawa Dec. 8 by not giving them a fair chance to vote for community directors.

Documents relating to the QIA's organization of the presidential election, including those from Ottawa polling stations, are relevant to the organization's approach to the community director's position, Haykowsky argued.

Eligible voters in Ottawa could vote for community director positions on Dec. 8 but only by proxy.

Voting by proxy allows eligible voters to delegate their vote to another eligible voter.

But the election notice issued by the QIA prior to the Dec. 8 election did not state this.

Molgat told Browne on March 13, "that has always been the practice in all QIA elections."

That explanation does not sit well with Redfern, who told *Nunatsiaq News* March 16 she believes the QIA violated the voting rights of eligible Qikiqtani voters in Ottawa on Dec. 8.

"I'm a little shocked and appalled when someone justifies a democratic voter violation on the grounds that this is how it's always been done," Redfern said.

Redfern said if the community director election result is quashed she would accept having Simon Nattaq, who defeated her by one vote, remain in position until December 2015, QIA's next election period, when the position could go up for election along with other vacant QIA positions.

“My goal from the beginning is to ensure all eligible Inuit are always provided ballots to vote at official polling stations,” Redfern said.

“I think and hope that [the] QIA shares my goals of protecting, promoting and preserving Inuit beneficiary rights, which includes the right to vote for all our reps.”

Browne ordered Haykowsky to submit written arguments for the documents she seeks from the QIA.

Browne will then issue a decision on which documents the QIA must hand over.

*An earlier version of this story reported that Madeleine Redfern said she would not run for community director if her application is successful. She intended to say that she seeks a new community director election for December 2015.*

**Direct Link:**

[http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674inuit\\_org\\_rejects\\_mediation\\_in\\_election\\_ballot\\_dispute/](http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674inuit_org_rejects_mediation_in_election_ballot_dispute/)

## **Barbara Kay: The remarkable Ryan Bellerose, a Zionist aboriginal**

[Barbara Kay](#) | March 17, 2015 | Last Updated: Mar 18 10:27 AM ET



The more he learned, the more he identified with Israelis, coming to believe that Israelis and the Métis shared historical commonalities.

On Sunday night, Montreal’s Hillel Concordia abruptly cancelled a Monday talk by political activist Ryan Bellerose, co-founder of Calgary United with Israel (CUWI).

It would have been a pro-Israel talk, which nowadays, Jews being so passionately divided on Israel, made certain Hillel constituents volubly unhappy. A pretext for disinviting him was found in what were deemed unacceptably crude satirical tweets posted by Bellerose about Hamas terrorists, unremarkable in their context, on an #AskHamas thread. Conceived to market Hamas propaganda, the thread ended up being buried in an avalanche of vicious and often hilarious anti-Hamas ridicule (e.g., “#AskHamas. Dying to know how to kill Jews, gays, women, kids...?” by Anne Bayefsky).

But Hillel’s bad faith (in my opinion, weighing their explanation against credible other sources) is not the story today. Rather, let me introduce you to the remarkable Ryan Bellerose.

Ryan Bellerose is a Métis from Northern Alberta. He grew up living rough on a “rez,” speaking “michif” until he was five years old. His father is Mervin Bellerose, who co-authored the Métis Settlements Act of 1989, passed by the Alberta legislature in 1990, which cemented Métis land rights. Ryan’s own people’s indigenous rights — and indeed all human rights — are therefore a passion he comes by honestly.

As a young adult, Bellerose founded Canadians for Accountability, a native advocacy group, then became an organizer and participant in Idle No More, until, as he put it in an extended interview, it was “infiltrated by Jew haters” from the anti-Zionist movement, which prompted his exit. For Ryan Bellerose is that most improbable of ducks, a Zionist aboriginal. How did *that* happen?

His father, determined Ryan should be well educated, not the norm in the hamlet of Paddle Prairie, Alta., gave him a set of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* for his fifth birthday. Ryan became hooked on history. The saga of Israel’s 1948 birth particularly captured his imagination as “the ultimate David and Goliath story.”

The more he learned, the more he identified with Israelis, coming to believe that Israelis and the Métis shared historical commonalities

Noting his enthusiasm, Ryan’s father gave him a book about the 1976 raid on Entebbe, which motivated research into the entire Arab-Israel conflict. Ryan was horrified by the 1972 Munich Olympic Games massacre, where 11 Israeli athletes were murdered by Palestinian terrorists, and again shocked by the 1972 Lod Airport massacre, where 26 civilians awaiting flights (including 17 Christian pilgrims) were shot dead by Palestinian terrorists.

The more he learned, the more he identified with Israelis, coming to believe that Israelis and the Métis shared historical commonalities of constant betrayal, rejection, expulsion from their homeland, exile and ethnic cleansing. Like the Métis, the Jews settled in land that nobody but they had ever called a homeland. Instead of becoming insular and bitter at Arab hostility to their presence, they succeeded, Ryan believes, because they always looked forward, making education a priority. Ultimately, Ryan admires Israel, because

“the achievement of self-determination in the creation of the nation state of Israel is something *no other indigenous people has ever accomplished in the history of the world.*”

There are numerous aboriginal Canadians who identify with Palestinians. Bellerose is persona non grata with them (“you’re not really an Indian,” they absurdly say to him), because he calls them out for intellectual dishonesty. Rejecting the left’s false narrative of Jewish “colonialism,” he affirms that the Jews, indigenous to Israel, were in fact colonized by the Arabs in the 7th century. Bellerose has written:

“The Palestinians are not like [aboriginal Canadians]. Their fight is not our fight. We natives believe in bringing about change peacefully, and we refuse to be affiliated with anyone who engages in violence targeting civilians. I cannot remain silent and allow the Palestinians to gain credibility at our expense by claiming commonality with us. I cannot stand by while they trivialize our plight by tying it to theirs, which is largely self-inflicted. Our population of over 65 million was violently reduced to a mere 10 million, a slaughter unprecedented in human history. To compare that in whatever way to the Palestinians’ story is deeply offensive to me.”

Last year Bellerose visited Israel for 20 days, fulfilling a dream he had harboured from childhood. This April, on a pilot trip called “Indigenous to Israel,” which he hopes will be the first of a series, Bellerose is leading a group of young Jews and aboriginal Canadians on a tour of Israel that will focus on Jewish ancestral ties to the land.

Bellerose has been nominated for a Hasby Award in the Best Young Defender of Israel category. He is speaking Wednesday at noon at the Canadian Institute for Jewish Research (isranet.org). I’ll be there, and hope many others who were disappointed by Hillel’s action will join me.

**Direct Link:** <http://news.nationalpost.com/2015/03/17/barbara-kay-the-remarkable-ryan-bellerose-a-zionist-aboriginal/>

## **Manto Sipi Cree Nation joins call for MKO grand chief's resignation**

**Chiefs want David Harper to resign for accepting money from nuclear waste organization**

[CBC News](#) Posted: Mar 17, 2015 6:24 AM CT Last Updated: Mar 17, 2015 6:55 PM CT

A northern Manitoba First Nation is joining the call for David Harper to resign as grand chief of Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak over concerns that he accepted money from the Nuclear Waste Management Organization.

The Manto Sipi Cree Nation in God's River, Man., says it does not endorse the \$312,689 agreement that Harper recently signed with the organization.

Harper told CBC News last week that the money is going toward educating his citizens about the risks involved with nuclear waste. The funds were not accepted in agreement to store waste, he added.

But Harper's move angered a group of chiefs from the Swampy Cree Tribal Council (SCTC), which said signing the agreement contravenes a 2014 moratorium against the storing of nuclear waste in Manitoba.

On Monday, the Manto Sipi Cree Nation issued a release saying it supports those who want Harper to step down as MKO grand chief over "signing the nuclear consultation deal that commits 30 MKO First Nations without their consent."

"The MKO Grand Chief is overstepping the sovereignty of each individual First Nation by signing the deal," Manto Sipi Chief Michael Yellowback said in a news release Monday.

The chiefs with the Swampy Cree Tribal Council, which is politically aligned with MKO, say they are pulling out of the organization until Harper has been removed from office — something he has refused to do.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/manto-sipi-cree-nation-joins-call-for-mko-grand-chief-s-resignation-1.2997985>

## Region VI Métis Nation signs partnership

By [Joanne McQuarrie](#), Peace River Record-Gazette

Wednesday, March 18, 2015 8:43:11 MDT AM



Ruth Kidder, Region VI MNA elder; Sylvia Johnson, Region VI president; Carol Ridsdale, Region VI vice president; Susan Tanner, job coach. Back row: Dionne Orr, job coach; Ben Lorencz, NCSG vice president;

Andrew Popko, NCSG vice president of Aboriginal Affairs and Major Accounts sign a partnership agreement.

A partnership was signed between the Region VI Métis Nation of Alberta and NCSG Crane & Heavy Haul Services Ltd. on March 10 at the Sawridge Inn & Conference Centre.

The agreement is project-specific; it focuses on the Shell Carmon Creek Creek in situ oil sands project and TransCanada Pipeline's Otter Creek Compressor Station, part of the Nova Gas Transmission Ltd. Wolverine River Lateral Loop pipeline project.

Proceeds from crane and heavy haul services work awarded to Region VI Métis Nation/NCSG for these projects will directly benefit Region VI communities through direct royalty payments.

The agreement will include training and employment opportunities for the Region VI Métis Nation, along with potential ownership of equipment required for long term maintenance work after construction is completed.

Both proponents are looking forward to the projects emerging from the partnership.

"Of course it'll open the doors for people we have here, the people we know who are looking for jobs," said Sylvia Johnson, president, Region VI Métis Nation.

"It's important to us to connect with industry. We've been here in this region for over 30 years. It's important for us to grow with industry. It's a win-win. We're happy with it if it can benefit the Métis and industry. They'll come to us, we'll give them names of the contacts we have."

The partnership will complement existing projects with the Region VI Métis Nation.

"We'll still run our projects for training; the Northwest Energy Aboriginal Workforce Project," Johnson said.

"We're looking forward to business opportunities due to our partnership with Region VI Métis Nation," said Andy Popko, Vice President, Aboriginal Affairs and Major Accounts, NCSG.

The signing coincides with the opening of the NCSG office close to the Peace River airport.

"It'll be open shortly; it's near completion," Popko said. "We've done some work already in Carmon Creek."

The partnership, he said, "is a new opportunity. For the last two years, there's been 18 joint ventures between aboriginal groups and NCSG. Métis Region VI is the latest. We focused where there's major activity in a region. In the Peace River area, it's Carmon

Creek (and) pipeline activity. It is the norm for major companies to identify joint ventures with any local aboriginal groups.”

Popko emphasized the partnership is important, “because Aboriginal groups have a key role in the economy. NCSG believes in partnering with these groups so they can share in the opportunities.

‘What these projects offer is profit-sharing, employment opportunities and 50% ownership of cranes with NCSG.” Popko said.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.prrecordgazette.com/2015/03/18/region-vi-metis-nation-signs-partnership>

## **Aboriginal Affairs shared wide range of information with spy agency to bolster Idle No More surveillance: documents**

[National News](#) | March 18, 2015 by [Jorge Barrera](#) |



**Jorge Barrera**

*APTN National News*

The federal Aboriginal Affairs department shared information with Canada’s spies and other federal law enforcement agencies to bolster surveillance of the Idle No More movement, internal government documents show.

The documents, obtained under the Access to Information Act, also reveal how easily Canadian authorities assume the possibility of violence when it comes to monitoring First Nation demonstrations.



The Harper government's proposed anti-terror bill, Bill C-51, would make it easier for federal departments and agencies to share information on widely-defined national security grounds.

The Public Safety documents stem from surveillance activity around the Idle No More movement as it was reaching its apex between December 2012 and January 2013. The documents focus on a number of protests planned between Dec. 19 and Dec. 23, 2012.

The documents show that Aboriginal Affairs not only shared and received protest information from the Canadian Security Intelligence Agency on protests, it also supplied details about a meeting between government officials and First Nation leaders. The information was passed on to the Integrated Terrorism Assessment Centre (ITAC), which includes CSIS and police services across the country.

“(Aboriginal Affairs) Quebec (branch) reported on Dec. 18 that a meeting is to occur in Ottawa on 20 Dec between government officials and First Nation leaders,” said one document titled, Planned First Nations Demonstrations. “(Government Operations Centre) has consulted with ITAC, RCMP, AANDC, (Transport Canada) and (Public Safety) Communications.

In another document titled, Update on “FN” Protests, Aboriginal Affairs is asked to provide information on Attawapiskat First Nation's housing situation and its state of emergency. Attawapiskat Chief Theresa Spence was in the midst of a liquids-only fast on Victoria Island in Ottawa during this time.

The documents also reveal information was directly exchanged between Aboriginal Affairs and CSIS.

“(Aboriginal Affairs) has confirmed with CSIS and law enforcement partners that a protest on Parliament Hill is scheduled for 21 Dec,” said the document, which was providing a breakdown of expected city-by-city protests. “There is no confirmation of numbers yet and no indicators of potential violence.”

While there were no “indicators of potential violence” specifically for the Ottawa-based action, security officials in Public Safety were convinced a possibility of violence existed because some “youth” mentioned the 1990 Oka crisis in online discussions.

The Oka crisis featured armed Mohawk warriors facing about 3,000 Canadian soldiers in a stand-off to protect burial grounds from being turned into golf greens near Montreal.

“According to social media, youth in the community have made references to the Oka crisis in 1990, implying a possibility of violence,” said one document with the subhead, Concerns. “A call has been placed to the Ottawa police intelligence section, awaiting response.”

Aboriginal Affairs officials also provided on-the-ground intelligence about Idle No More protests to the Government Operations Centre (GOC), which is the federal nerve-centre created to deal with threats of a national scale.

“As of 11:00 on 19 Dec, (Aboriginal Affairs) reported that traffic is backed up as far as the eye can see,” said a report of a protest in London, Ont. “Crowds of people, many of them holding signs, waving flags and blowing horns, were in cars, vans and buses moving toward the 401.”

Ottawa-based human rights lawyer Paul Champ said the leap security officials made in assuming a potential of violence based on online references to Oka shows how little they understood First Nations people.

“Obviously the Oka protest is a seminal moment for First Nation people across the country in terms of an assertion of rights Vis-a-vis the government. It doesn’t necessarily imply violence,” said Champ. “It shows how deeply they misunderstand First Nation people and the significance they attach to the Oka protest.”

Champ said the documents also show how easily it is for security personnel to assume the threat of violence. Under Bill C-51, police can execute arrests and hold people on the belief that a terror act “may” be committed, instead of “will” be committed, which is the current standard. Bill C-51, if passed, would make it illegal to promote acts of terror online.

The documents show Aboriginal Affairs is currently willing to share a wide range of information with other federal agencies and departments. Aboriginal Affairs officials have already been caught sorting through the Indian status file of First Nations child advocate Cindy Blackstock. Indian status files contain information on an individual’s family links.

“Bill C-51 would allow Aboriginal Affairs to share that information with CSIS if that would help CSIS with investigations of threats to national security,” said Champ, who represented Blackstock in her human rights complaints against Ottawa over the underfunding of on-reserve child services.

Aboriginal Affairs officials not only sifted through Blackstock’s Indian status records, but also monitored her online activities and public appearances.

The documents undercut a claim made during a House of Commons committee hearings last week by Roxanne James, the parliamentary secretary for Public Safety. During an appearance by Assembly of First Nations National Chief Perry Bellegarde before the MPs committee studying Bill C-51, James claimed First Nations had never been considered a security threat by the Canadian state in her life time. She also claimed First Nations would never have been flagged under the proposed increased information sharing powers provided by Bill C-51.

*APTN* has reported on how the [GOC prepared to deal with fallout from the 2013 RCMP raid on a Mi'kmaq anti-fracking camp near Elsipogtog in New Brunswick](#). *APTN* also reported the [Canadian Forces counter-intelligence arm also monitored the situation in Elsipogtog](#).

Aboriginal Affairs and CSIS did not return a request for comment as of this article's posting.

**Direct Link:** <http://aptn.ca/news/2015/03/18/aboriginal-affairs-shared-wide-range-information-spy-agency-bolster-idle-surveillance-documents/>

## Aboriginal Sports

### **VanCity basketball team offers aboriginal youth a chance to beat the odds**

WAWMEESH G. HAMILTON

Special to The Globe and Mail

Published Monday, Mar. 16 2015, 9:36 PM EDT

Last updated Monday, Mar. 16 2015, 9:43 PM EDT

The sounds of runners squeaking and basketballs bouncing on a hardwood floor fill the Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre gym on a Saturday afternoon.

VanCity junior boys basketball coach Albert Ross halts the drill with a voice that echoes across the gym. "You guys have to remember to stack it up on this side when you run this one," he says to 10 sweating players about their position on the floor. "Now run it again."

VanCity is about more than just basketball. VanCity has team rules that include staying out of trouble and staying in school, and players say being on the team makes them want to beat the odds. A Vancouver School Board report notes that only 35 to 46 per cent of aboriginal students graduate from high school compared with 86 per cent of non-aboriginal students.

VanCity junior boys' and girls' teams have played basketball out of the VAFC since the facility's inception in 1981. The team is for aboriginal youth aged 13 to 17, and they play in tournaments against other aboriginal teams from First Nations across B.C.

VanCity stalwart Dylan Joe, 17, and four other teammates also play basketball for the Britannia Secondary School Bruins. Several east Vancouver high school teams, including

two currently playing in the AAA high school boys championships, have aboriginal players.

Seeing more aboriginals playing high school basketball is bittersweet for Mr. Ross, 63. A Vancouver resident since 1972, Mr. Ross is a member of the Lax Kw'alaams First Nation and grew up in Prince Rupert. He played basketball for Rupert's Booth Secondary Ravens, one of the few aboriginal players during that era.

"A lot of our people never made it to high school back then so they formed their own teams and tournaments starting in the 1950's," he said. "Sports kept me in school and it's doing the same for these boys."

Mr. Ross is more than a coach to the team. He's a father figure to players, many of whom come from single-parent homes.

"It's my turn to give back now. I've reached most of my goals and I want to help them reach theirs," he said.

Basketball has kept Mr. Joe on a good path, he said. "If it weren't for basketball I might be hanging around with the wrong crowd and getting into trouble," Mr. Joe said. "I don't know what I'm going to do when I finish school. It's scary. But basketball is a big part of my life."

The team's rules have produced results. In the 10 years Mr. Ross has coached, nine players have gone on to college – some to play basketball. "Others have gone on to nursing, trade school and are doing really well, too," Mr. Ross said.

Cultural identification is a big part of the team as well. According to Statistics Canada, Vancouver is home to 40,000 aboriginal people. First Nations usually field their own teams, but VanCity players come from several First Nations, including Nisga'a, Haisla, Lax Kw'alaams, Lil'wat and Metlakatla. "We're like a United Nations," Mr. Ross said.

Mr. Joe connected to his aboriginal roots through the team. Born and raised in Vancouver, he identifies more with east Vancouver than he does his home First Nation in Mount Currie.

"Not many natives live in my housing complex, so I've really gotten to know my people through the team," Mr. Joe said. "And when we were at an aboriginal tournament last year I met people from my home nation who said they knew my mom. That was cool."

The team is readying to host the VanCity Classic, a Lower Mainland youth aboriginal basketball tournament being held from March 15-20. Twenty teams from First Nations across B.C. will be competing.

The VanCity junior girls are also competing in the tourney.

The team is young with an average age of 15, but most players play for high schools and for Basketball BC regional teams, said head coach James Savino, whose daughter plays on the team.

Aboriginal basketball games can be rough, especially girls' games. "The girls' games can be a lot dirtier than boys. There's blatant elbows and they don't try and hide it, either," Mr. Savino said.

The girls have set their sights high, Mr. Savino said. "They want to win it, and I think they have a good chance."

Back the VAFC gym, Mr. Ross wraps up the boys' practice.

"You know, the biggest thing I try and teach them is how to work hard," he said. "Life doesn't end after basketball. The harder you work, the more successful you'll be in life – period."

**Direct Link:** <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/vancity-basketball-team-offers-aboriginal-youth-a-chance-to-beat-the-odds/article23489215/>

## **Energy, the Environment & Natural Resources**

### **The Right to Be Cold: A revelatory memoir that looks at what climate change means for the north**

Naomi Klein

Special to The Globe and Mail

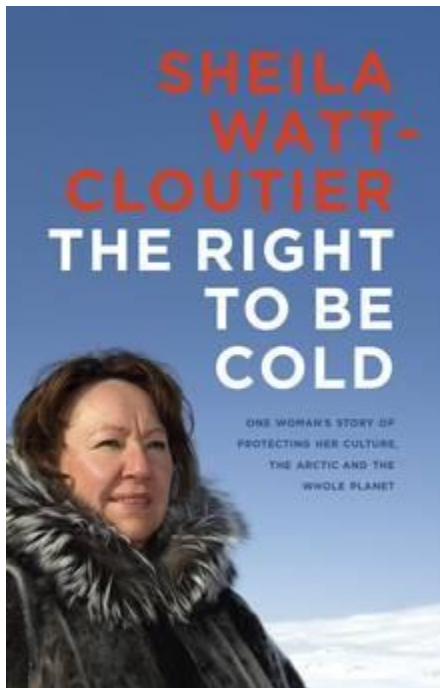
Published Friday, Mar. 13 2015, 1:03 PM EDT

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- Title The Right to Be Cold: One Woman's Story of Protecting Her Culture, the Arctic and the Whole Planet
- Author Sheila Watt-Cloutier
- Genre memoir
- Publisher Allen Lane
- Pages 336 pages
- Price \$32.95

- Year 2015

Sheila Watt-Cloutier is one of the most widely respected political figures to emerge from Canada's Arctic, and this potential was identified early on. When she was just 10 years old, she and her friend Lizzie were selected as promising future Inuit leaders and sent to live with a white family in the tiny coastal community of Blanche, N.S. Having grown up in Nunavik, Que., on dog sleds and in canoes, the young Watt-Cloutier loved new experiences and approached the long voyage south in the spirit of adventure.



The girls were in for what Watt-Cloutier now describes as a “brutal shock.”

They were assigned to the home of a family named Ross, headed by a man with a nasty temper. Watt-Cloutier missed her family terribly and longed to return to her “Arctic childhood of ice and snow.” Raised on seal and whale meat, she pined for “country food,” as Northern game is known, and found the fresh peas and “tumblers full” of cow’s milk at the Rosses’ to be “revolting.”

Sheila and Lizzie dutifully dressed in prim outfits and completed their schoolwork – but they also expressed their intense homesickness in “anguished letters” to family. The ones Lizzie wrote to her sister simply said: “I want to go home. I want to go home. I want to go home.”

In one of the most unsettling passages in *The Right to Be Cold*, Watt-Cloutier describes discovering all of these intimate expressions “opened and spread out on the dining-room table.” They would not be sent, the girls were informed, and from now on, all of their letters would be vetted by the Rosses.

The impact of this early violation of privacy was profound. “It took me a long, long time after that experience to feel comfortable or even *able* to express myself, my thoughts and my feelings. In one simple act, the Rosses helped to weaken my voice for years to come.”

The loss, suppression and ultimate rediscovery of voice are themes that run through this courageous and revelatory memoir, which spans from Watt-Cloutier’s earliest childhood at communal feasts in Old Fort Chimo; to go-go dancing at a residential school in Churchill, Man.; to rising within the ranks of the Inuit Circumpolar Council, the non-governmental body representing the interests of Inuit people living in four Arctic nations; to eventually becoming such a powerful advocate for Inuit rights at United Nations climate-change negotiations that she was nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize in 2007.

In the book’s early political chapters, describing Watt-Cloutier’s first bureaucratic posts, the author seems to be holding back, as if some invisible judge is still vetting and censoring her words. Conflicts within institutions like the Kativik School Board are referenced; yet, their substance remains obscure. She writes, for instance, that she decided to leave the board and sent a memo stating “that I did not want my Inuk voice to be silenced any longer.” But having shared no details about how she was being silenced and why, I found myself wondering whether the silencing was ongoing.

As the memoir progresses, however, with Watt-Cloutier taking on ever more prominent international roles, the early vagueness drops away. It is in these gripping chapters that Watt-Cloutier starts naming names in high places, giving readers an inside view of the backroom negotiations that profoundly shaped the international climate-change consensus.

As the title of the book suggests, a major theme of *The Right to Be Cold* is how climate change poses an existential threat to cultures that are embedded in ice and snow. If the ice disappears, or if it behaves radically differently, then cultural knowledge that has been passed on from one generation to the next loses its meaning. Young people are deprived of the lived experience on the ice that they need to become knowledge carriers, while the animals around which so many cultural practices revolve disappear. As Watt-Cloutier has been arguing for well over a decade now, that means that the failure of the world to act to reduce its emissions to prevent that outcome constitutes a grave human-rights violation.

This argument shares much in common with legal cases lodged by several First Nations against highly polluting resource development: If the water is poisoned and the animals are sick, our courts have been told, then legally protected rights to hunt and fish are being violated. Watt-Cloutier’s innovation was extending this argument, which had previously focused on site-specific mines and dams, to the planetary-scale crisis of climate change. With the help of a team of legal advisers and backed by a long list of Inuit elders, she submitted a landmark petition to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights arguing that, by failing to prevent climate change, the United States was violating Inuit human rights.

Part of what makes this book so illuminating is that it insists on being more than a manifesto. In weaving politics with her own life story, themes emerge that challenge the tendency to treat climate change as some new and singular threat. In Watt-Cloutier's narrative, just as dog sleds have been replaced by snow machines, so the emissions from the entire fossil-fuel-driven global economy are threatening the survival of her culture. And just as pollutants from industrial activities have ended up in the flesh and fat of the animals Inuit people rely on for food, so these same industrial activities are causing global temperatures to rise, threatening the continued existence of these same animals. Climate change, in other words, is nothing new – it is the ultimate expression of the *same* threats that have been ravaging this part of the world for a very long time.

Inuit culture, however, is far from dead and in fact is thriving despite the odds. That, argues Watt-Cloutier, is very good news, because her people's hard-won knowledge about how to live sustainably on the land "could serve as a model for all nations, compelling the world to make the strong cuts in emissions needed to mitigate climate change."

Yet, this moral leadership is only possible if Arctic politicians resist the temptation to adopt an "if you can't beat 'em, join 'em" attitude toward fossil-fuel extraction beneath their rapidly melting ice. On this point, Watt-Cloutier leaves no room for ambiguity. After summarizing the devastating impacts of oil and gas extraction on indigenous lands around the world, she demands: "How is it that the extraction industry is going to work better for us? This is one heck of a risky business we're getting into as a means of pulling ourselves out of poverty."

Moreover, if governments in Nunavut and Greenland join the fossil-fuel gold rush, the ability to provide critical climate leadership will disappear. "Just a few years ago, we stood solidly together on high moral ground to defend a way of life," she writes. "Yet our pursuing resource-extraction industries now means that that high ground is fracturing as quickly as the ice is melting."

Months before a major United Nations summit on climate change in Paris, and with low oil prices calling many high-cost forms of extraction (including Arctic drilling) into question, these are fighting words. Clearly, the silenced, homesick girl is gone for good. In her place is a confident and forceful leader, sounding the alarm that unless we change course – and fast – our collective home will become incurably sick.

*Naomi Klein's latest book, This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. the Climate, won the Hilary Weston Writers' Trust Prize for Nonfiction.*

**Direct Link:** <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/arts/books-and-media/book-reviews/the-right-to-be-cold-a-courageous-and-revelatory-memoir/article23449642/>



# No consensus at Kiggavik uranium mine hearings in Baker Lake

[CBC News](#) Posted: Mar 13, 2015 5:28 AM CT Last Updated: Mar 13, 2015 5:28 AM CT



About 150 people were attending the final hearings in Baker Lake, Nunavut, on the Areva Resources' proposed Kiggavik uranium mine. (Jordan Konek/CBC)

About 150 people are attending the final hearings on Areva Resources's proposed Kiggavik uranium mine near Baker Lake, Nunavut, this week.

Areva was in the community presenting its Final Environmental Impact Statement on the project.

The proposed uranium mine and milling operation about 80 kilometres west of Baker Lake would take three to four years to construct and would be expected to operate for 12 years. Areva says the mine would pay more than a billion dollars in royalties to the territorial and federal governments.

"We commit to ongoing communications so the communities are aware of what we're doing," said Barry McCallum, manager of Nunavut affairs for Areva Resources Canada.

"It's very important to us that the Kivalliq communities benefit from the project."

Areva says construction of the mine is expected to create up to 750 jobs; the operating mine will create up to 600 jobs.



The final hearings in Baker Lake, Nunavut, on the Areva Resources' proposed Kiggavik uranium mine are expected to wrap up this week. (Jordan Konek/CBC)

Local businessman Peter Tapatai resigned his position as Baker Lake representative with the Kivalliq Inuit Association in order to freely support the Kiggavik mine.

He says the people in Baker Lake used to live on welfare before the mines, but now people can afford to put food on tables.

He says the Nunavut Impact Review Board is there to protect the environment.

Eva Voisey of Whale Cove, who attended the hearings, says people were not given enough time to share their concerns.

"We're here to share our ideas, although we're not given enough time to speak," she said. "And as Inuit, we need to speak out because that's the only way to express our concerns."

She says she opposes the project and that Inuit are just giving up their land while the company takes the money.

Maggie Perkison of Baker Lake expressed concern that Areva will only be in the region for a short period.

"After watching on television how much mess they've created on some areas of other people's lands, I got scared of what they could do to our land on a long-term basis," she said.

Perkison says animals are the only source of affordable food in the North and it is important that the animals are protected.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/no-consensus-at-kiggavik-uranium-mine-hearings-in-baker-lake-1.2989765>

# Industry should involve First Nations early in planning resource projects, U of A audience told

By Sheila Pratt, Edmonton Journal March 12, 2015



James Anaya, a former UN advocate for indigenous people, wants First Nations brought in earlier to participate when resource projects are planned.

EDMONTON - First Nations need to be involved earlier in planning resource projects, says a former UN advocate for indigenous people.

“Companies tend to come with a done deal and indigenous people have to say ‘yes or no’,” lawyer James Anaya said Thursday during a lecture at the University of Alberta on First Nations and resource industries.

“In that case, there is no real negotiation and there’s a power imbalance that has to be addressed.”

Last year, Anaya strongly criticized Canada’s relations with First Nations in his 2014 report as UN advocate for the rights of indigenous people, including the failure to address poverty and failure to have a clear policy to consult with First Nations before major resource projects proceed.

While Canada does better than most countries in dealing with First Nations with benefits agreements from resource projects, there is still lots of room for improvement, he said.

To have a real choice about a development, First Nations need to have a “range of options,” Anaya said.

That might include partnerships with resource companies, setting up their own companies or looking at alternatives to extraction industries such as agriculture, sustainable development opportunities and other economic development.

“If the only option is to reject a project, that’s not a choice,” he said.

“First Nations should be able to control what goes on their land and government and industry should not be afraid to respect that,” he said.

“That’s how it works in communities in the dominant culture.”

Anaya said later in an interview there will always be conflict between First Nations and companies over resources, “in a large part because all sides are fearful without their rights defined.”

First Nations rights does not just mean a veto, he added.

**Direct Link:**

<http://www.edmontonjournal.com/Industry+should+involve+First+Nations+early+planning+resource+projects+audience+told/10885073/story.html>

## **Yukon First Nations unhappy Bill S-6 passed 2nd reading**

**Yukon MP says he would have voted in favour of the bill, had he been at Wednesday's debate**

[CBC News](#) Posted: Mar 13, 2015 3:00 PM CT Last Updated: Mar 13, 2015 3:00 PM CT



Council of Yukon First Nations Grand Chief Ruth Massie was surprised Yukon MP Ryan Leef was not in the House to debate Bill S-6 on Wednesday.

The Coalition of Yukon First Nations that is opposed to Bill S-6 is disappointed that the bill passed second reading in Parliament on Wednesday. The legislation would amend the Yukon Environmental and Socio-Economic Assessment Act.

Yukon First Nations say they'll have no choice but to sue the federal government if the bill passes.

They say it undermines the Umbrella Final Agreement, a political agreement pertaining to land, compensation and self-government finalized between Yukon First Nations and territorial and federal governments in 1990.

In a statement, CYFN Grand Chief Ruth Massie says she is surprised Yukon MP Ryan Leef wasn't in the House of Commons to vote on a bill that will "so significantly impact all Yukoners."

She says if Bill S-6 passes, it's a "clear decision" against land claims and warns the legislation would be "simply bad for industry and development."



Little Salmon Carmacks Chief Eric Fairclough says the aboriginal affairs committee should spend more time in Yukon. (CBC)

Little Salmon Carmacks Chief Eric Fairclough says that although First Nations are pleased the aboriginal affairs committee will visit Whitehorse for a committee hearing, they aren't happy the hearing will only last one day.

The committee is expected to visit Whitehorse near the end of this month.

## **Yukon MP defends absence from House**

Yukon MP Ryan Leef wasn't in the House of Commons when Bill S-6 was being debated and voted on, but says he debated the bill in the House earlier this winter.

Leef says he was in Washington, D.C., for a Conference of Arctic Parliamentarians meeting on Wednesday and says he had no planned intention to miss it.



Yukon MP Ryan Leef says he was at a Conference of Arctic Parliamentarians meeting in Washington, D.C., on Wednesday.

"My schedule had already been fixed and it just happened that those things coincided at the same point in time," he says.

"My obligations in Washington were pretty concrete and very much in the best interests of Yukoners."

Leef says he would have voted in favour of the bill, had he been there.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/yukon-first-nations-unhappy-bill-s-6-passed-2nd-reading-1.2994631>

## **First Nations fight for herring to become less of a catch**

MARK HUME

VANCOUVER — The Globe and Mail

Published Sunday, Mar. 15 2015, 10:02 PM EDT

Last updated Sunday, Mar. 15 2015, 10:15 PM EDT

For decades, conservationists on the West Coast have been calling for restrictions on the commercial herring fishery, an industry so efficient it counts its catch in tonnes.

The fishery hit its peak in the 1950s, when up to 250,000 tonnes of the shimmering silver fish were hauled in annually. But the relentless overfishing led to a collapse of herring stocks in 1967.

Stocks rebounded, but never returned to past heights. More recently, annual hauls have been 10,000 to 20,000 tonnes, as the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) limits catches to 20 per cent of the estimated total biomass of herring stocks.

But some argue even that is far too many fish.

Herring are known as forage fish because they are preyed on by so many other species, including humans. Whales, dolphins, seals, sea lions, cod, salmon and sea birds all feed heavily on herring, making those small fish hugely important in the coastal ecosystem.

Because of that, First Nations have long been at the forefront of the fight to reduce the herring catch.

First Nations have been battling in the courts for the past two years to halt DFO's planned fisheries in the waters of Haida Gwaii, off the West Coast of Vancouver Island and on the Central Coast.

The Haida Nation won an injunction last week to stop fishing. The Heiltsuk, who set up blockades to stop commercial fishing on the Central Coast last year, have been trying to negotiate reduced fisheries this year. On the West Coast of Vancouver Island, the Nuuchahnulth lost a bid for an injunction, but in nearby Barkley Sound, the Tseshah First Nation was celebrating after DFO called off a planned fishery that the band had threatened to blockade.

Peter Lantin, president of the Haida Nation, says aboriginal groups such as his are not opposed to commercial fishing – but they are against any harvest that is not sustainable. And they do not think herring stocks can sustain the heavy pressure that DFO sanctions.

“At the end of the day, this is about herring,” he said in a recent interview.

“We believe herring haven't recovered enough and shouldn't be fished. And [DFO] should respect that,” he said. “If [herring] do recover, based on our mutual agreement of what healthy stocks are, then we can go down the road of talking about a commercial fishery again.”

The Heiltsuk, Nuuchahnulth and Tseshah have very similar positions. They will support fishing, but only if there are no conservation concerns.

DFO has long regarded the herring population as being made up of a few really big stocks on the B.C. coast. It does test fisheries to get estimates of stock size in a general region and then decides how many fish can safely be harvested.

But Tony Pitcher, a professor of fisheries at the University of B.C.'s Fisheries Centre, says DFO may have it wrong, and that First Nations, which have long argued stocks are localized and need to be managed locally, the way individual salmon runs are, appear to have science on their side.







The tiny Inuit community of Clyde River, Nunavut, is **heading to court** to fend off unwelcome oil exploration in Baffin Bay and Davis Strait, a precedent-setting move in the struggle to defend Inuit self-determination and the Arctic environment against reckless oil and gas development. Helping to facilitate the rapacious pursuit of northern fossil fuel resources is the National Energy Board (NEB), whose discretionary authority has expanded as environmental legislation has weakened under the Conservative government.

The NEB is meant to be an arms-length tribunal (but in reality is decidedly pro-industry) created by the federal government to regulate inter-jurisdictional energy development, such as pipelines that cross provincial boundaries. The NEB also has a large role north of the 60th parallel, and, in the Clyde River case, has shirked responsibility to other regulatory bodies governing the Nunavut Settlement Area, whose boundaries fall just short of the project area. NEB decisions are meant to be unbiased and are equivalent to the judgements of superior courts, but under its watch, serious environmental and socioeconomic risks posed by Arctic seismic testing appear to have been disregarded.

### **Threats to environment rebuffed**

The proposed project will see boats travelling the Arctic waters of Baffin Bay and Davis Strait towing air gun emitting sound blasts 100,000 times louder than a jet engine, every 13 to 15 seconds, 24 hours a day, for five months of the year for five consecutive years. In the **environmental assessment report** released as justification for the NEB's approval of the project, the board acknowledged such dangers to marine life as permanent hearing loss, disruption of acoustic communication, behavioural change and altered migration routes, but accepted that the mitigation measures proposed by the proponent would be sufficient. However, key information about the risks and the efficacy of the mitigation measures were missing.

For example, according Dr Linda Weilgart, a marine biologist with expertise on the impacts of sound on marine life, Arctic marine mammals may be particularly vulnerable to the blasts due to their lack of previous exposure and their reliance on echolocation to find breathing holes in the ice. A **2012 peer-reviewed study** affirms the possibility of particular sensitivity in narwhals, and identifies seismic testing as the likely cause behind the deaths of 1,000 narwhals trapped under the Arctic ice in 2008. In addition, residents of Clyde River and Pond Inlet recall first-hand encounters with animals affected by previous oil exploration projects, such as seals who were deaf or whose ears were bleeding. All of this information was missing from the EA report.

Scientific evidence suggests that underwater seismic blasts can raise noise levels by a factor of 100 over 300,000 square km and be heard 4,000km away from the vessel. This information was not considered in the EA report. On the contrary, the NEB accepts that risk to marine mammals will be mitigated primarily through the employment of Marine Mammal Observers (MMOs) who scan the surface of the water and order the withholding of blasts if they see animals swim into the 500m-radius "safety zone".

The ability of MMOs to detect animals within the safety zone is dubious, let alone to recognise injuries or to supervise 300,000 square km of potentially affected waters. Further, there is no plan to monitor for harm to marine life after testing is over or outside the project area.

The NEB regulatory review also puts the Arctic environment at risk in its blindness to the bigger picture, adapting a narrow “case-by-case” approach that neglects cumulative impacts and climate change, and completely ignores the connection between seismic testing and the fossil fuel development for which the data is intended. These concerns were repeatedly dismissed in the EA report, in consultation with Inuit, and in the refusal to withhold project approval until the completion of the broader strategic environmental assessment currently collecting baseline data on the regional environment.

### **Inuit rights swept aside**

Indigenous rights are protected under the Canadian constitution, and in Nunavut, the Inuit right to harvest wildlife is further safeguarded by the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement (NLCA), negotiated between the government of Canada and the Inuit who live there. When considering a decision that may adversely impact their rights, such as the approval of a resource development proposal, the crown has a legal duty to consult with indigenous peoples meaningfully, in good faith, and with the overarching goal of reconciliation.

Under Canadian law, the depth of consultation required depends on two factors: the strength of the indigenous claim to the rights in question and severity of the potential impact. Since the rights of Clyde River Inuit are enshrined in the NLCA, the strength of their claim to them is indisputable. Further, because the risk to the marine environment is significant and marine life is so critical to the economy and culture of Clyde River, the project’s potential impact is serious. Therefore, the crown is responsible for extensive dialogue with potentially affected communities.

Nevertheless, ineffective meetings planned by consultants contracted by the proponents have left Baffin Island Inuit disillusioned and embittered. At the meetings, residents encountered company representatives who gave incomprehensible presentations, were unable to answer basic questions about the project and its potential impact on marine animals, could not offer an accessible source of more information, had no decision-making power themselves, appeared to assume project approval and repeatedly deflected the communities’ concerns. At times, residents were required to submit commentary within a short period and without all the facts, including plans for what benefits, if any, the communities would accrue in return for their agreement to shoulder the burden of risk. At every meeting, residents expressed frustration and their opposition to a project that could not offer basic protection for their millennia-old way of life.

The NEB overrode these concerns, and, in fact, failed even to mention the constitutionally protected rights of Inuit or the legal requirements of the duty to consult in its EA report. The Canadian government, meanwhile, sidestepped responsibility despite

vocal criticism of the consultations from Inuit organisations and the fact that the duty is legally the crown's, not the NEB's.

### **Development on whose terms?**

The Clyde River case raises serious questions about the NEB's regulatory regime in the Arctic, including its rightful role in discharging the crown's duty to consult with indigenous peoples.

Members of the Clyde River community have made it clear that opportunities for economic development are needed and wanted, but must not come at the expense of Inuit self-determination or the marine environment on which Baffin Island communities have depended for thousands of years. If Clyde River claims victory in court, their struggle to stop the NEB process from running roughshod over their rights will set an empowering precedent for northern peoples refusing to become sacrifice zones in the scramble for northern resources.

Ramifications could even extend beyond Canadian borders to Arctic nations such as the United States, Russia, Norway, Sweden and Finland where Inuit, Gwich'in, Saami and other indigenous peoples are fighting to protect their way of life from irresponsible fossil fuel development and the disproportionately severe northern impacts of climate change.

*The author is a master's candidate at York University researching Colonialism and Extractive Industries in Canada.*

**Direct Link:** <http://arcticjournal.com/opinion/1395/putting-profit-people-hunt-arctic-oil>

## **First Nations Power Authority awards \$580K contract for northern solar project**

By Bruce Johnstone, Leader-Post March 17, 2015



First Nations Power Authority has awarded Points Athabasca Contracting and its partner Solar Logix with the contract for the design, supply and installation of solar power generation systems at two schools in Saskatchewan's Far North, the Regina-based organization announced Tuesday.

First Nations Power Authority has awarded Points Athabasca Contracting and its partner Solar Logix with the contract for the design, supply and installation of solar power generation systems at two schools in Saskatchewan's Far North, the Regina-based organization announced Tuesday.

The two roof-mounted, 64-kilowatt solar photovoltaic power systems are designed to reduce electricity bills at Father Megret Elementary School in Hatchet Lake Denesuline First Nation and Father Gamache Memorial School in Fond du Lac Denesuline First Nation, the authority said in a press release.

"(The) solar panels should help with the high cost of keeping the school operating for the year," Hatchet Lake First Nation Chief Bart Tsannie said in the release.

"These renewable power generation systems are important to First Nations communities to lower their power bills, increase the reliability of the electrical grid in remote areas and reduce their environmental footprint through reducing greenhouse gases," added First Nations Power CEO Leah Nelson Guay.

Last year, First Nations Power along with the two First Nations secured funding from Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada's eco-energy for aboriginal and northern communities program.

Additional funding for this project was also received from Western Economic Diversification Canada and AANDC's community opportunity readiness program, as well as from First Nations Power's subsidiary, Bullfrog Power, which provides financing to support the development of new green energy projects across Canada.

Both projects will also take advantage of SaskPower's net metering rebate program, which is in effect until Nov. 30, 2016.

First Nations Power received seven proposals and worked closely with leadership at Hatchet Lake and Fond du Lac First Nations to make the final selection. The project is expected to cost \$580,000, with installation completed in 2015.

Ian Loughran, vice-president of projects and business development for First Nations Power, said the \$580,000 represents the "installed cost, including transportation, engineering and everything else. It comes down to \$4.50 per watt," Loughran said. "It was a surprise to us how low that is."

Loughran said the energy savings are expected to be around \$8,000 per year, mainly through credits from SaskPower's net metering rebate program. "The sunniest times are in the summer when school is out, so we'll get credits during the summer and eat up those credits in the winter."

Loughran added that the projects will also allow First Nations Power — a non-profit organization mandated to help First Nations establish business opportunities in the power

sector — to assess the efficiency of solar power in the Far North. “We hope it’s the start of many energy-efficiency and renewable energy projects in the North,” Loughran said. “The bottom line is trying to reduce the cost of power up North.”

Points Athabasca is an aboriginal-owned general contracting company, which has built a number of projects since 1999. Solar Logix, which was founded in 2009 in Thunder Bay, Ont., has become Ontario’s leading provider of photovoltaic (PV) rooftop solar arrays, with six locations in the province.

**Direct Link:**

<http://www.leaderpost.com/technology/First+Nations+Power+Authority+awards+580K+contract+northern+solar+project/10897730/story.html>

## **Baker Lake Inuit, NWT Dene pledge to fight uranium project together**

**“Areva has not succeeded in convincing us”**

NUNATSIAQ NEWS, March 18, 2015 - 3:05 pm



Caribou outside of Baker Lake. (IMAGE COURTESY OF BAKERLAKE.CA)

Inuit and Dene from Saskatchewan have joined forces in opposition of Areva Resources Canada’s proposed Kiggavik uranium project outside Baker Lake.

Baker Lake’s hunters and trappers organization signed a declaration of cooperation with the Lutsel K’e Dene First Nation in the Northwest Territories March 11, a document the two parties submitted to the Nunavut Impact Review Board’s two-week hearing into the uranium project.

The declaration hinges on two main issues: the project’s lack of a timeline and start date, and the absence of designated protected areas for caribou calving and post-calving grounds.

Those are the same arguments the HTO made at the very start of the hearing, [when it filed a motion to have the process suspended](#), although the motion did not pass.

“We cannot reasonably consider the impacts of a mine if we no idea when the company will build it,” said the March 11 joint declaration.

“We are concerned the Kiggavik will cause further exploration and mining in these sensitive areas, it they are not designated protected.”

The Lutsel K’e Dene First Nation has already expressed its opposition to Areva’s project — or uranium exploration in general — in fear of possible contamination of the natural environment.

“The Lutsel K’e Dene First Nation has maintained a long-standing ban on uranium-related development in its territory based on past negative experiences with this particular industry,” the First Nation said in a submission to the NIRB hearings.

“Areva has not succeeded in convincing us that this project does not pose a risk to the caribou herds on which we depend.”

Another issue is the proximity of the project to the Thelon River and Thelon wildlife sanctuary, Lutsel K’e wrote in its submission; a proposed road crossing the river and development close to the sanctuary “are prospects that we are not comfortable with,” it said.

Lutsel K’e is located roughly 800 kilometres southwest of Baker Lake.

“With this declaration, we affirm that we will try to work together to stop this proposal as it is currently presented,” the groups said together March 11. We commit to standing together to protect the caribou herds that both of our communities depend upon for our traditional cultural and economic well-being.”

But Baker Lake’s HTO chair Richard Aksawnee appeared to soften the group’s stance in its closing statement to the hearings last week, by suggesting the HTO is not necessarily against the Kiggavik project.

“Some people seem to think that the Baker Lake Hunters and Trappers Organization is against mining, and against jobs. Like we can either have jobs, or have caribou to hunt,” Aksawnee said. “I disagree. I want the next generations of Inuit to have both.”

“We may not necessarily be against Kiggavik, but we are firmly against it being approved at this time,” he said in the HTO’s closing statement.

That hearing wrapped up in Baker Lake March 14. Next, the NIRB will prepare its final hearing report, which should be complete and made public by the end of April.

**Direct Link:**

[http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674baker\\_lake\\_inuit\\_nwt\\_dene\\_pledge\\_to\\_fight\\_uranium\\_project\\_together/](http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674baker_lake_inuit_nwt_dene_pledge_to_fight_uranium_project_together/)

## **Land Claims & Treaty Rights**

### **Metis-based defence not accepted in hunting case**

[CLARE MELLOR STAFF REPORTER](#)

Published March 12, 2015 - 8:50pm

A Shelburne County man who claimed his Metis heritage allowed him to hunt out of season has lost his appeal of a conviction for shooting a deer.

Jack Leonard Hatfield of Cape Sable Island shot a buck in 2003 near French Lake, Yarmouth County and delivered the carcass to the Natural Resources Department depot in Tusket.

The case moved slowly, but Hatfield was convicted April 28, 2014, in Yarmouth provincial court of two summary offences under the Wildlife Act, hunting without a valid licence or permit and unlawfully possessing a deer carcass. He was fined \$100.

An appeal of that decision was heard Feb. 2 in Nova Scotia Supreme Court in Yarmouth.

In a decision delivered this week, Justice John Murphy upheld Hatfield's conviction, ruling that the trial judge made no error of law. A written decision was released by the court Thursday.

"The trial judge's findings are reasonable and supported by the evidence," Murphy said in his decision. Hatfield claimed to be a member of a Metis community that has an ancestral connection to one in Cape Cod, Mass., that had customs and practices in place before European control.

Murphy said the judge was correct in not accepting Hatfield's aboriginal rights claim.

"Mr. Hatfield did not meet his burden to establish on the balance of probabilities on the whole of the evidence that there was a culturally distinctive geographically identifiable community of mixed ancestry on Cape Sable Island before effective European control was exercised in that area."

**Direct Link:** <http://thechronicleherald.ca/novascotia/1274352-metis-based-defence-not-accepted-in-hunting-case>

# K'atl'odeeche First Nation to sign on to N.W.T. devolution deal

[CBC News](#) Posted: Mar 12, 2015 5:39 PM CT Last Updated: Mar 12, 2015 5:39 PM CT

The K'atl'odeeche First Nation near Hay River will formally sign onto the Northwest Territories devolution deal next week.

Chief Roy Fabian will sign the agreement Monday morning at the legislative assembly in Yellowknife.

The First Nation had concerns that devolution would put too much power in the hands of the territorial government. But the chief says by signing on, the First Nation will get a share of resource royalties and the opportunity to be at the table when issues around land and resources are up for discussion.

"It's not about dealing with rights, it's about co-management," said Fabian. "It's about us working together to manage the land."

Fabian says the decision to sign on to the agreement was made at a general band meeting in January. He says the vote was unanimous.

The Dehcho and the Akaitcho First Nations are the only two groups that have not signed on to the deal.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/k-atl-odeeche-first-nation-to-sign-on-to-n-w-t-devolution-deal-1.2993164>

## Interim Guidelines Made for Using New Aboriginal Title Lands in BC





The Tsilhqot'in Nation and Xeni Gwet'in First Nations Government recently authorized extending guide outfitter licences in the Title areas. (Photo Credit: [BC Gov Flickr](#))

**March 14, 2015 by [Stacy Penner](#)**

The Tsilhqot'in Nation and the Province are taking steps to transferring title lands southwest of Williams Lake to the Aboriginal group.

The process of transferring the lands to Tsilhqot'in management, benefit, and control follows a [landmark Supreme Court of Canada decision](#) in June of 2014 that declared Aboriginal title to about 2000 square kilometres in the their traditional land in the Cariboo-Chilcotin area. This ruling was the first in Canada that gave Aboriginal Title to a large portion of land outside of a reserve.

As the transfer is a complex process, ongoing discussions are going on between the Tsilhqot'in Nation and the Province. For 2015, the two groups have interim understandings and practices in place about maintaining emergency and wildfire response and maintenance; private property owners and current tenure holders accessing the Title lands; and existing guide outfitters operating in areas within and overlapping the Title lands. Permanent arrangements are currently being developed.

So far, the Tsilhqot'in Nation and Xeni Gwet'in First Nations Government have allowed existing guide outfitter licenses to be extended for one year to give the business certainty for the upcoming season. The agreement says that no increase of guiding quotas will be established compared to the 2013/2014 year. All the fees for guide outfitting in the Title lands are to be paid to the Province and remitted to the Tsilhqot'in Nation. No other hunting activities have been authorized in the Title area.



Premier Christy Clark, Minister of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation John Rustad and the Tsilhqot'in Nation Chiefs met on title lands in Nemiah Valley to sign a Letter of Understanding. (Photo Credit: [BC Gov Flickr](#))

“The transition of management and control of Tsilhqot’in Aboriginal Title lands is going to take time,” said Chief Roger William, Xenigwet’in First Nation and Vice Chair of the Tsilhqot’in National Government. “The declaration of Aboriginal Title is a first for Canada. We want to do this right. We need to look after our members and our lands, but we also want to be respectful of others who live and work on our lands.”

“We want to create agreements that benefit everyone on Tsilhqot’in Aboriginal Title lands and incorporate our cultural values,” said Chief William. “The Tsilhqot’in Nation and Xenigwet’in have taken this step to provide some business certainty for guide outfitters while we develop our own laws, policies and processes for our lands. There is a lot of work to be done, but these steps are positive for everyone.”

Aboriginal Title gives the Tsilhqot’in Nation the right to exclusive use and occupation of the land, the right to the economic benefits of the land, and the ability to determine how the land is used.

Another step in the reconciliation process was the Province’s official apology in the Legislative Assembly for [wrongfully hanging six Tsilhqot’in war chiefs](#) who were invited to discuss terms of peace.

**Direct Link:**

[http://www.kelownanow.com/watercooler/news/news/Provincial/15/03/14/Interim\\_Guide\\_lines\\_Made\\_for\\_Using\\_New\\_Aboriginal\\_Title\\_Lands\\_in\\_BC](http://www.kelownanow.com/watercooler/news/news/Provincial/15/03/14/Interim_Guide_lines_Made_for_Using_New_Aboriginal_Title_Lands_in_BC)

## **First Nations demand northern chief's removal over nuclear deal**

By: Alexandra Paul

Posted: 03/14/2015 2:02 PM | [Comments: 15](#) | Last Modified: 03/15/2015 3:49 PM | [Updates](#)



David Harper, Grand Chief of the chief of the MKO (Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak) representing northern first nations, shown at a news conference in Norway House in January.

A group of First Nations has demanded the removal of northern Manitoba's Grand Chief over an agreement to fund a study worth more than \$300,000 on the risks of storing nuclear waste in the Canadian Shield.

Manitoba adopted nuclear-free status in 1987, ruling out any storage of spent nuclear fuel from commercial or research reactors.

But David Harper, chief of the MKO (Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak) representing northern first nations, negotiated a two-year \$312, 689 funding agreement this winter with the Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO), a body created by Canada's nuclear waste producers and mandated by federal law to manage the country's nuclear waste.

None of the nine proposed disposal sites being considered by the NWMO is in Manitoba, but at least one, at Ignace in northwestern Ontario, 460 kilometres east of Winnipeg, is part of the Nelson River watershed covering territory stretching westward to Alberta.

Swampy Cree Tribal Council chiefs denounced any consideration of a deal, citing a moratorium approved by MKO last year on storing or moving nuclear waste through Cree territory.

"I was shocked to find out that MKO Grand Chief Harper signed an agreement with the Nuclear Waste Management Organization without our knowledge or our consent," Council head Nelson Genaille said in a statement issued on Thursday.

The Council, it said, would take no further part in the activities of the MKO executive "until such time as Grand Chief Harper has been removed from office due to a lack of trust to follow the directions of his member communities."

As Chief of the Sapotaweyak Cree Nation, one of seven First Nations within the council, Genaille led a protest this winter against Manitoba Hydro's plans to run the Bipole III transmission corridor from northern to southern Manitoba through its land claim.

Harper has defended the nuclear deal, saying similar funding was provided to First Nations in Ontario and Saskatchewan. The agreement, he says, involves strictly a study of the issues — not a commitment to having spent fuel around.

On Thursday, he dismissed any notion of resigning.

"Step down for doing my job? I don't think so," he told the Free Press in a text message. "I'm just abiding by the MKO constitution which states, 'Protect First Nations.'"

The council's statement broke open weeks of brewing opposition to any consideration of a nuclear site, whatever the proximity. Chiefs were privately furious with the MKO.

Any threat to pull out of the executive council, which acts on behalf of the full assembly of 30 chiefs, would hardly cripple its activity. But it sends out a clear signal its leadership is operating under a cloud.

Opponents say MKO, hit by government cutbacks and funding scandals, is desperate for the money and has paid little heed to the possibility of waste being stored in Manitoba or passing through it.

The SCTC includes the First Nations of Mathias Colomb, Marcel Colomb, Sapotaweyak, Wuskwi Sipihk, Grand Rapids, Mosaskahiken and Chemawawin.

Mathias Colomb Cree Chief Arlen Dumas, who has led protests against mining development in Pukatawagan, northeast of The Pas, said chiefs had "lost all faith" in Harper.

"MKO has absolutely no legal, political or moral authority to act on our behalf in relation to our aboriginal or treaty rights," Dumas said in the statement.

Harper has said the dispute is rooted in a misunderstanding. First Nations, he says, need to be fully informed of the "legitimate threat that a nuclear waste repository could pose."

The NWMO describes spent nuclear fuel rods as by-products of nuclear power generation that are "highly radioactive and must be carefully managed for a very long period of time, essentially indefinitely."

It says spent fuel is now stored near reactor sites. After being removed from a reactor, it is first placed in a water-filled pool for seven to 10 years so that its heat and radioactivity decrease. Used fuel bundles are later placed in dry storage containers, silos or vaults. The NWMO was tasked with finding a safe long-term disposal site in one of three locations: deep underground in the Precambrian Shield, at reactor sites or in a centralized site, above or below ground.

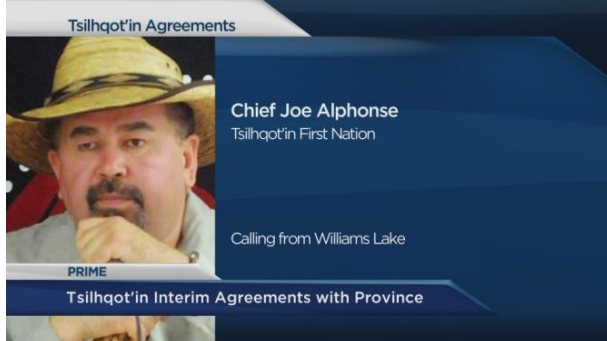
It says it wants common ground for discussions among First Nations as it embarks on a laborious examination of the nine sites.

"This is over and above what would be required if there was a (final) project," NWMO spokesman Mike Krizanc said by telephone. "Those communities would have to be consulted as required by legislation. We think it's important that communities that are potentially affected and are interested are provided with the information they want, deserve and need."

**Direct Link:** <http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/local/First-Nations-demand-northern-chiefs-removal-over-nuclear-deal-296325181.html>

# Tsilhqot'in First Nation a step closer to title lands

By Laura Kane The Canadian Press, March 14, 2015 12:57 am



WILLIAMS LAKE, B.C. – A British Columbia First Nation is one step closer to exerting control over its territory after a historic [Supreme Court of Canada](#) decision, with the announcement of several agreements with the provincial government.

The high court's decision last year meant the Tsilhqot'in Nation became the first in Canada to win title to its land, located west of Williams Lake in the B.C. Interior.

The nation and the province issued a joint statement Friday saying they've had constructive talks in recent months on how to implement the ruling, resulting in several new interim deals.

"We've got a big vision we're all as a nation working towards, and how we get there is just a matter of process," Tsilhqot'in National Government vice chairman Roger William said in an interview. "The interim agreements are to get to the big vision."

The new deals involve issues including guide outfitters, emergency and wildfire response, road maintenance, and land access for private property owners.

The Tsilhqot'in has extended existing guide outfitter licences for one year, banning increases in guiding quotas in 2015 and allowing fees to be paid to the province and remitted to the nation.

The nation has not authorized other hunting activities within its lands.

William, who is also chief of the Xeni Gwet'in, one of six nations that make up the Tsilhqot'in, said the step was taken to provide "business certainty" for guide outfitters while the nation develops its own policies.

Steve Thomson, minister of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations, said the agreement represents a new approach to resource management with the nation.

The landmark Supreme Court of Canada ruling gave the nation the right to exclusively use, occupy and economically benefit from the land, as well as the ability to determine how it is used.

In September, the Tsilhqot'in, Xeni Gwet'in and the province signed a letter of understanding in which they committed to create a framework for negotiations by March 31, 2015.

John Rustad, minister of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation, said he expects the deadline will be met.

Talks are continuing between the B.C. government and the nation's leaders to hammer out permanent decisions on the issues the interim agreements address. But Rustad said the overall goal is reconciliation.

"These are interim steps to try and make sure that various things can flow and happen within that title territory, but also it's one of the steps toward reaching that long-term reconciliation," he said in an interview.

Last October, Premier Christy Clark apologized for the wrongful hanging of six Tsilhqot'in chiefs in 1864 and 1865.

Rustad said the ministry's working group has met with the nation multiple times.

"There's some frustration on both sides from time to time as you work through issues, and that's to be expected in any negotiation and relationship," he said.

"But I think at the core of it, there is a lot of optimism between the province and the Tsilhqot'in. We are going to be able to move forward with the relationship."

**Direct Link:** <http://globalnews.ca/news/1881539/tsilhqotin-first-nation-a-step-closer-to-title-lands/>

## **Yukon government switches lawyers in Peel watershed appeal**

**New law firm has a good reputation for its dealings with First Nations**

[CBC News](#) Posted: Mar 13, 2015 7:40 AM CT Last Updated: Mar 13, 2015 5:33 PM CT



Justice Ron Veale heard the dispute over the Peel Watershed land use plan in July. (Philippe Morin/CBC)

A law professor at the University of Ottawa says the Toronto law firm hired by the Yukon government to handle its appeal of the Peel watershed land use case has a good reputation.

The government replaced a top Vancouver lawyer with Torys LLP to handle the appeal of a Yukon Supreme Court decision that found the government was not following land claim agreements with First Nations.

Gilles LeVasseur says Torys has experience dealing with First Nations and particularly their interactions with government and mining companies.

He says the firm will understand that deep connections between aboriginal people and the land make cases like this different from other legal disputes.

"If they need to litigate and do the case for appeal, then they can do it," LeVasseur says. "But in the meantime you know, you can still have that side discussion and negotiation."



First Nations and environmental groups took the Yukon government to court over the Peel watershed in July. (CBC)

Mark Pindera, an assistant deputy minister in Yukon's justice department, says the government will wait to see the new firm's recommendations before making a decision.



"The team at Torys was selected because of their expertise and clearly these particular counsel come with an exceptional reputation and track record," he says.

Although the law firm's website notes "recent Supreme Court of Canada decisions have reinforced the importance of building relationships with Aboriginal peoples to develop resource projects in Canada," Pindera won't say if that means the government now wants a negotiated settlement on the Peel.

In explaining his reasons for appealing the Supreme Court's decision, Yukon premier Darrell Pasloski told the CBC in January that land claims and self government agreements do not give First Nations the authority to make decisions on Crown land.

Yukon's NDP and Liberal parties have said they want the government to abandon its appeal.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/yukon-government-switches-lawyers-in-peel-watershed-appeal-1.2993320>

## **Grassy Narrows First Nation holds logging protest in Kenora**

**Ontario government has cleared the way for logging to resume near Grassy Narrows First Nation**

[CBC News](#) Posted: Mar 16, 2015 12:46 PM ET Last Updated: Mar 16, 2015 3:44 PM ET



Youth leaders from Grassy Narrows First Nation opposed to clear cut logging rally inside the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry offices in Kenora on Monday. (Alex Hundert/Twitter)

Members of Grassy Narrows First Nation will be in Kenora, Ont., today to take part in a protest rally being held to show the First Nations continuing opposition to logging in the Whiskey Jack Forest.



Grassy Narrows spokesperson Randy Fobister said the protest will be will be a peaceful one.

“It's pretty much a rally,” he said.

“We are going to have vehicles and, in each location we are going to walk on the side of the road, back and forth. And there is going to be a drum,” Fobister said. “There is going to be some people speaking. And I will speak as well too.”

About 50 people are expected at the rally.

Fobister said they'll be making stops at both Kenora Forest Products and the local Ministry of Natural Resources office.

Despite opposition from Grassy Narrows First Nation, Ontario's 10-year Forest Management Plan for the area includes clear cutting on the community's traditional territory.

Grassy Narrows has been opposing the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry's plans for logging since before the current Forestry Management Plan was initiated, according to a news release from the First Nation.

## **Youth 'standing up for the land'**

In March of last year, the Grassy Narrows' youth group released a statement rejecting the plan, as did the community's chief and council.

“The trees, like the water, are sacred,” stated Brenda Kokokopenace, an Anishinabe Elder from Grassy Narrows. “We have a duty to protect Mother Earth, and that duty is sacred, too. It is good to see the youth standing up for the land. It shows they know who they are and that they can wake up the people who have lost that connection.”

Many of the placards displayed by youth and community members at today's rallies are expected to display the familiar slogan, “No Logging, No Mercury.

This, according to the release, is a reference to Grassy Narrows' parallel struggle against mercury poisoning caused by the logging industry, as well as to the connection between clearcut logging and increased mercury content in the water.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/grassy-narrows-first-nation-holds-logging-protest-in-kenora-1.2996899>

## **County seeks information on First Nations land claim**

By [Elliot Ferguson](#), Kingston Whig-Standard

Tuesday, March 17, 2015 3:57:02 EDT PM



Frontenac County is to consider joining the call for more information about a massive First Nations land claim in eastern Ontario.

County councillors are to discuss endorsing a letter from the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters calling for a meeting with officials involved with the land claim.

“There has been a long-standing absence of information and consultation with stakeholders and the public around this critical issue,” North Frontenac Coun. John Inglis’s resolution states.

“The lack of information provided, and the absence of any meaningful consultation since the last meeting, has resulted in a complete vacuum of stakeholder awareness, and no evidence that stakeholder input was adequately considered.”

While an update about the land claim is on the agenda for the monthly meetings, the councillor tasked with keeping county council in the loop, Inglis, has had little to report since the agreement in principal was first announced in late 2012.

In a resolution to be discussed Wednesday, the county is to call for a joint emergency meeting of the committee of external advisers and the municipal advisory committee before June 30.

The chief negotiators for the provincial and federal governments are requested to be there to provide information about the current state of the land claim negotiations, the changes that have occurred since a series of public meetings in the spring of 2013, the current positions of the upper level governments and details about how public input about the land claim was incorporated into the negotiations.

Randy Hillier, Conservative MPP for Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington, has been among those critical of the proposed agreement, citing concerns about resolution of

conflict in areas where there are documented land use, such as forestry or mining, and undocumented but historically established use, such as hunting.

Hillier has also stated proposed free access to the Rideau Canal would be an issue.

When it was quietly released by the Ontario Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs in mid-December 2012, the proposed agreement between the Algonquins of Ontario and the provincial and federal governments included the transfer to the Algonquins of \$300 million in addition to more than 475 square kilometres of land and recommended approaches to deal with issues such as Algonquin harvesting rights, forestry operations and parks.

More than two dozen parcels of land in Frontenac County are included in the proposed land claim. The land claim, originally filed in 1983, includes 36,000 square kilometres, roughly encompassing the Ottawa and Mattawa river watersheds within Ontario.

The northern boundary of the claim territory follows the Ottawa River from the Mattawa River in the northwest to L'Orignal, just west of Hawkesbury.

The southern boundary of the claim territory is based on the height of land defining the Ottawa River watershed.

According to the Ontario Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, the total area within claim territory includes: privately held patented land (approximately 59%), Algonquin Park (21%), Ontario public lands or owned by provincial Crown corporations (16%), federal Crown land (4%).

It encompasses more than 90% of Algonquin Park and stretches in a southeast direction to include Bancroft and Sharbot Lake, then east and north to L'Orignal.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.thewhig.com/2015/03/17/county-seeks-information-on-first-nations-land-claim>

## **Municipalities, First Nations join forces to speed up land settlements**

Posted: 03/17/2015 5:05 PM



From left, James Wilson, Treaty Commissioner, Chief Nelson Genaille, president, Treaty Land Entitlement Committee of Manitoba (TLE ) and Doug Dobrowolski, president, Association of Manitoba Municipalities (AMM) sign a memorandum of understanding to establish a partnership to speed up settlement of First Nations landclaims under treaties dating back more than a century. The signing took place during the AMM's Municipal Officials Seminar at the RBC Convention Centre Tuesday.

Manitoba's municipalities and First Nations joined forces Tuesday with an agreement designed to speed up the pace of treaty land settlements, cut red tape and lead to the rapid establishment of urban reserve arrangements profitable to everyone.

A memorandum of understanding signed by the Association of Municipalities of Manitoba (AMM) and two First Nations groups commits both sides to share information and accelerate procedures to settle claims — nearly 20 years after a framework agreement signed by provincial and federal authorities pledged to do virtually the same thing.

Both sides said Tuesday's accord should kickstart a long-stalled process of settling claims and getting down to setting up businesses.

"I believe it is historic, as municipalities are often left out of the loop in dialogues between First Nations and other levels of government," Manitoba Treaty Commissioner James Wilson, responsible for promoting awareness of treaties, said in an email after the signing.

"This not only recognizes the role they play, especially in development of urban reserves, but allows us to work together to make things easier for both municipal and First Nations governments."

AMM President Doug Dobrowolski said First Nation economic success stories were being "held up by the federal process.

"By signing this agreement, we hope it will show the other two levels of government that we are willing to sit down and get these TLE (Treaty Land Entitlement) deals done," he said by telephone.

According to a study issued last week by the Aboriginal Economic Development Board, It takes an average of four years to cut through federal and provincial red tape on paperwork for land development, compared to six months to a year for municipalities.

And that, aboriginal leaders say, leads to lost economic opportunities.

Cutbacks to federal survey budgets have slowed the process across the country, but Manitoba faces additional challenges of competing Metis land claims.

Under the 1997 TLE agreement, Manitoba First Nations are owed 1.1 million acres (440,000 hectares, nearly the size of Prince Edward Island) as set down in treaties sometimes dating back more than a century. A federal process set up back then put First Nations to work with provinces and Ottawa on the settlements and to date about 473,000 acres (191,416 hectares) have been converted for 14 out of 15 Manitoba First Nations. Another six First Nations hold additional outstanding claims.

Small but successful examples of urban reserves have been operating on Winnipeg's outskirts for years, with the Swan River Arboc Gas and Smoke Shop in Headingley and the Roseau River Red Sun Gas Bar and Smoke Shop on Highway 6, off the Perimeter.

A few weeks ago, Long Plain First Nation opened the first reserve-owned gas station within city limits. It owns another urban reserve gas station and conference centre in Portage la Prairie.

Six First Nations that have the right to purchase land within municipalities are the ones that stand to benefit from Tuesday's deal.

"It's a demonstration, that First Nations and municipal governments are working together to expedite the land purchase process," Chris Henderson, executive director of the Treaty Land Entitlement Committee, one of the two First Nations signatories on Tuesday, said by telephone.

"Hopefully Canada will reduce the amount of red tape it takes to create reserves, Henderson said of the deal Tuesday.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/local/Municipalities-First-Nations-join-forces-to-speed-up-land-settlements-296638861.html>

## **Quebec aboriginals say TransCanada pipeline review flawed**

Thu Mar 19, 2015 4:46pm EDT

By Mike De Souza

OTTAWA (Reuters) - The Canadian government's review of TransCanada Corp's proposed Energy East pipeline is deeply flawed, Quebec aboriginal leaders said on Thursday, signaling they could line up with opponents of the C\$12 billion (\$9.43 billion) project.

In a letter sent to Canada's natural resources minister and distributed to the media on Thursday, Ghislain Picard, chief of the Assembly of First Nations Quebec-Labrador, criticized the federal government for failing to consult aboriginal communities on the scope of the review.

Many Canadian aboriginal communities and groups have opposed crude oil pipelines passing through their traditional territory, in some cases threatening to turn to the courts to block approval.

The Canadian government previously approved Enbridge Inc's Northern Gateway pipeline linking oil-rich Alberta to the Pacific coast in 2014. But that project has stalled, facing rising costs related to more than 200 conditions imposed by the government as well as fierce opposition from environmentalists and many aboriginal groups along the proposed route.

If approved, Energy East would carry up to 1.1 million barrels of crude oil per day from Alberta's oil sands to the Atlantic coast, along a 4,200 km (2,850-mile) route.

Canada's energy regulator, the National Energy Board, is leading the Energy East review process, but has not yet started formal hearings.

The letter from Picard said the project review leaves out issues such as the climate change impacts from related oil industry expansion. He also expressed concerns that the government was not providing the funding needed to allow aboriginal groups to do research and fully participate in the process.

"All these failings signify that if adjustments and corrections are not made to the review process of the Energy East project, such a process risks being tainted from the start and devoid of legitimacy," wrote Picard.

A Canadian government spokesman said that anyone directly affected by the project, including aboriginal groups, would be consulted. TransCanada said in a statement that it participates in consultations with aboriginal leaders with the goal of obtaining consent.

Serge Simon, grand chief of the Mohawks of Kanesatake near Montreal, said his community was prepared to use blockades to stop the project, which it fears could pollute land and water.

"Blockades have been a very useful tool in the past, and despite the threat of being locked up for life, I don't think that's going to stop us," he said in an interview.

(Reporting by Mike De Souza; Editing by Jeffrey Hodgson and Richard Chang)

**Direct Link:**

<http://ca.reuters.com/article/domesticNews/idCAKBN0MF2KI20150319?sp=true>

## **N.B. premier: Govt' will improve First Nations consultations**



New Brunswick Premier Brian Gallant leaves the closing news conference to the Canada's premiers meeting in Ottawa, Friday Jan. 30, 2015. (Adrian Wyld / THE CANADIAN PRESS)

The Canadian Press

Published Thursday, March 19, 2015 1:53PM EDT

FREDERICTON - New Brunswick Premier Brian Gallant says changes are being made to improve government consultation with First Nations groups.

He says at least one person in the leadership of each government department will be trained on the duty to consult.

Gallant says too often across Canada, governments and other groups wait too long before beginning consultations.

He says too many people think consultation is only needed on energy projects, adding that even the construction of a school could impact a waterway and First Nations may have concerns that their rights are being infringed.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/n-b-premier-govt-will-improve-first-nations-consultations-1.2287998>

# Special Topic: Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women

## Living in fear of being written off as another 'high-risk' aboriginal woman

PETER SCOWEN

FORT McMURRAY — The Globe and Mail

Published Friday, Mar. 13 2015, 7:28 PM EDT

Last updated Saturday, Mar. 14 2015, 11:32 PM EDT

*This story is part of an ongoing Globe and Mail investigation into hundreds of missing and murdered indigenous women in Canada.*

Melissa Herman takes the usual precautions when she goes for an early-morning run along the Snye River. She wears a bright yellow shell and brings along her bounding dog, a high-energy mashup of husky and chocolate lab named Charlie. But then she takes a further step, calling her brother and telling him when she's running and the route she'll take, so that someone knows where she is.

It's not because Fort Mac is particularly unsafe, even in Ms. Herman's downtown neighbourhood next to the infamous Syncrude Towers. Running through Snye Park is no more dangerous than going for a jog through one of Toronto's leafy ravines. What troubles Ms. Herman, 28, is that, if she were actually to go missing or be murdered, she would be written off by the RCMP and by society as just another "high-risk" aboriginal woman.

"I'm scared that if something happens to me, they're going to be, 'Oh, why was she jogging on that trail at 6 o'clock in the morning? High-risk behaviour!' It's so real," she says. "I think that's why I try to present myself the way that I do, because if I do [go missing] I don't want to be the 'high risk.' I don't want that in my profile at all."

The possibility of going missing or being found dead is an ugly fact of life for aboriginal women. It happens at an alarming rate – an RCMP report in 2014 said that 1,017 aboriginal women were murdered and 164 went missing between 1980 and 2012. Aboriginal groups, including the Native Women's Association of Canada, and several provinces have been calling on the federal government to launch a national inquiry. Earlier this month, the United Nations' Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women added its voice to that chorus. The Conservative government has refused.



According to the RCMP, aboriginal women made up 16 per cent of the women murdered in Canada, vastly out of proportion with their 4-per-cent share of the country's female population. The proportions are even more out of whack in Alberta. It was the province or territory with the highest number of murdered indigenous women in the report – 206. Indigenous women make up approximately 3.1 per cent of the provincial population, based on 2011 census data, and yet accounted for 28 per cent of the murdered women in Alberta from 1980-2012.

In the most stark terms, if you are an aboriginal woman in Alberta, you are nearly 10 times more likely to be murdered than a non-aboriginal woman.

Ms. Herman is the single mother of a 10-year-old girl. She studies aboriginal entrepreneurship at Keyano College in Fort McMurray and works full-time as a student assistant in the college's development department. It's a job that lets her take time off to attend her daughter's science fairs and other school activities.

She lives a busy life, sharing one of Fort Mac's expensive rents with a friend. She and her daughter often return to Janvier, the native reserve about 90 minutes south of Fort McMurray where her mother was born, to see family and spend time in the bush.

Ms. Herman's life hasn't always been this quiet, though. As a teen she was homeless, drinking, taking drugs and avoiding school. It was after her daughter was born that she started focusing on her education and work. Even after that, though, there were times she was employed but still had to sleep on a relative's couch with her daughter because she couldn't afford housing. It was always a struggle.

"My thing is trying to present myself in a way where I would be respected and would have *some* value," Ms. Herman says. "Because I don't think there is any value. Even with what I feel like I've done – I'm educated, I'm well-rounded – I've still had people call me a 'squaw.' I've still had people tell me just the most ignorant thing where you're just..." Her voice trails off.

The problem, as Ms. Herman and many others see it, is that the RCMP have been too quick in the past to write off the missing and dead as "high-risk" on the grounds they were unemployed and/or homeless, and abused drugs and alcohol. The 2014 report labelled these "risk factors contributing to their disappearance."

This has left the family and friends of victims convinced the Mounties see their missing daughters, wives and sisters as the authors of their own misfortune, and not a high priority.

The Mounties are willing to admit this was true in some cases. Vickey Hulm, the sergeant in charge of the province's full-time missing-persons unit in Edmonton, said in an interview that the distrust "may have come through my organization through history."

“Absolutely I understand that feeling,” Sgt. Hulm said when told of Ms. Herman’s perception that native women are of little importance to the RCMP. “What you heard is not foreign to us.” When asked what she would say to Ms. Herman if she met her, she said, “I’d apologize to her that she feels that way.”

Amnesty International says this “high-risk” labelling, combined with racism and stereotyping, denies “the dignity and worth of Indigenous women.” The human-rights group also blames federal government policies, especially residential schools, for breaking up families and “leaving many Indigenous women and girls extremely vulnerable to exploitation and attack.”

In Fort McMurray, if you meet an aboriginal man or woman in their 50s or 60s, there is a high likelihood that they were forced by Ottawa, with the help of the RCMP, into residential schools at ages as young as six.

“This was not 100 years ago,” Ms. Herman points out. “The last residential school closed in the ’80s in Alberta. So when people say, ‘Get over it...’ ”

The disproportionate number of women and girls who’ve been murdered or gone missing in Alberta also means that everyone in the province’s aboriginal communities knows a victim or the family of one. Ms. Herman was friends with Amber Tuccaro, a 20-year-old woman from Fort Chipewyan who disappeared outside Edmonton in 2010 after travelling there from Fort McMurray – where she was living – with her son and a friend.

Ms. Herman was a news reporter at a local radio station at the time and remembers thinking something was off about Ms. Tuccaro’s disappearance. She says she wanted to continue airing stories about Amber afterwards, but her news director felt it was old news.

“After Amber went missing, I started going through all the databases and I had a folder of 11 missing or murdered women from Fort McMurray since the ’90s,” Ms. Herman recalls. “I had this little folder and they would make fun of me for [it].”

Ms. Tuccaro disappeared in August, 2010, and then in October so did Janice Desjarlais, a local homeless woman. The RCMP said it had video surveillance footage of Ms. Desjarlais and her boyfriend climbing into a dumpster in downtown Fort McMurray. They were looking for a place to sleep. In the morning, only the boyfriend is seen leaving, and then a garbage truck comes and empties the dumpster.

The police did a nine-day search of the local landfill but found nothing. Janice Desjarlais, 35, simply disappeared. The boyfriend, who reported she was missing, was never a suspect.

Ms. Herman recalls the attitude at the time of Ms. Desjarlais’s disappearance as, “Oh, Janice was drunk and she climbed in a dumpster. What do you expect to happen?”

Two years and a month after Ms. Tuccaro disappeared, her case changed to a murder investigation when some of her remains were found in the woods near Leduc, Alta. The RCMP has since admitted that “initial elements of the investigation were mishandled” after her disappearance – an admission that came last year after Amber’s mother, Vivian Tuccaro, filed a complaint against the RCMP detachment in Leduc for failing to conduct a thorough investigation.

Sgt. Hulm said that since Ms. Tuccaro’s disappearance, the Edmonton-based missing-persons unit has begun triaging new cases on a daily basis, rather than weekly. If the team spots anything unusual or in need of follow-up, it will contact the relevant RCMP detachment immediately.

“I can’t say for sure, but if we’d had that kind of triage when Amber was missing it might not have gone where it did,” Sgt. Hulm said.

It will be a long time before Ms. Herman has faith in the RCMP. And it’s a message she passes on to her daughter.

“I want to make sure she knows that nobody is going to look out for her more than her. Don’t depend on the RCMP. Yes, you call them, but don’t put all your eggs in one basket. You can do whatever you want and they’re not going to protect you.

“I refuse to be a statistic,” she added. “I’m not going to be that person. The more stuff like Amber happens, the more motivated I am to [make sure] that didn’t happen for nothing.”

**Direct Link:** <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/living-in-fear-of-being-written-off-as-another-high-risk-aboriginal-woman/article23461886/>

## **Substantial gap discovered in RCMP database of anonymous dead**

RENATA D’ALIESIO and KATHRYN BLAZE CARLSON

The Globe and Mail

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*This story is part of an ongoing Globe and Mail investigation into hundreds of missing and murdered indigenous women in Canada.*

Reports on more than 250 unidentified human remains are not in an RCMP-managed database created to help link the missing with the anonymous dead – a substantial gap the federal police agency refuses to acknowledge.

A Globe and Mail [investigation](#) uncovered the discrepancy after a survey of the country's coroners and medical examiners. The Globe found there were 697 unidentified remains in Canada when the data were collected, but the RCMP says its national database had files on only 431 nameless deceased as of Feb. 24.

This means information on 266 unidentified remains – nearly four in 10 – is not being electronically checked against missing-persons reports: 6,762 people, including children, were listed as vanished in late February.

Police and death investigators view the national database and its automated software-driven analysis, which began operating in May, as a powerful tool for helping solve cold cases and returning nameless deceased to their families. In some instances, an identification could help put a killer behind bars.

Ontario and British Columbia, the two provinces with the most unidentified remains, have undertaken reviews in a bid to narrow the discrepancy. The absence of so many anonymous dead is prompting some families to question Ottawa's commitment to naming the nameless.

"That's a huge gap," said Lorelei Williams, who was in Ottawa last month for a national roundtable on missing and murdered aboriginal women. "That is so many families that [could] put closure to this. I'm wondering if my aunt is there."

Ms. Williams's aunt, Belinda Williams, disappeared in 1977 in British Columbia. Her family does not know what happened to her, or whether she is alive. A cousin of Ms. Williams, Tanya Holyk, also went missing. Her DNA was found on serial killer Robert Pickton's farm in Port Coquitlam, B.C.

In response to questions about the database gap, the RCMP said it does not confirm The Globe's figures. The police force also did not address why the discrepancy exists or whether it is concerned files are missing from the database, which is fed by reports submitted to the Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC) – also managed by the Mounties.

RCMP spokesman Sergeant Greg Cox said the police agency's National Centre for Missing Persons and Unidentified Remains (NCMPUR) works with primary investigators to ensure relevant information about missing persons and unidentified remains are entered into CPIC and thereby into the relevant database.

Although coroners and medical examiners are responsible for identifying the anonymous dead, it is police who have access to CPIC and upload data.

“The information contained in CPIC is added, maintained, modified and removed by each contributing police agency,” Sgt. Cox said in an e-mail.

Creating the database was a key goal of NCMPUR, established in 2011. The Conservative government said the centre would be an important investigative tool for police, coroners and medical examiners. The government said it could also help address the “disturbing number” of unsolved cases of murdered and missing aboriginal women.

Indigenous women are far more likely to disappear or be killed than non-aboriginal women. In May, 2014, an RCMP report revealed that 1,181 aboriginal women vanished or were slain between 1980 and 2012.

British Columbia, which has Canada’s most advanced strategy for linking missing persons with unidentified remains, last year moved to address the discrepancy between its anonymous-dead caseload and the number of files in CPIC. Two people – one from the B.C. Coroners Service and one from B.C. RCMP – reviewed and analyzed information in 64 cases not in CPIC or the NCMPUR database.

“It is important that we have these cases on NCMPUR to improve the likelihood of identification,” said Laurel Clegg, acting manager of the coroners service’s identification and disaster response unit. “These families are waiting.”

Some of the 64 cases were open but inactive, Ms. Clegg noted. Some were closed because there was no hope of identification at the time. As technology advances, cases are reopened.

“Now we’re saying, ‘We have DNA. We have all these tools now that we didn’t have then. Let’s go back and look at those cases,’” Ms. Clegg said. B.C. had 183 unidentified remains at the time of the Globe survey.

Neither Manitoba, Quebec nor Nunavut would comment on the discrepancy between the number of files in the national centre’s database and the total tallied by The Globe, saying the database and CPIC are under federal jurisdiction.

The coroners services also said they could not answer whether all of their unidentified remains – four in Manitoba, 169 in Quebec and 11 in Nunavut – are in CPIC. Nova Scotia also did not know how many of its 14 unidentified files are in CPIC, while Saskatchewan chief coroner Kent Stewart said three of its eight nameless deceased are listed in the police information centre.

“In the other cases, we are considering whether there is any value in entering the information, particularly given the nature of the specimen,” Mr. Stewart said in an e-mail.

Ontario’s chief coroner, Dirk Huyer, said his office does not know how many of the province’s 239 files are in CPIC and the NCMPUR database, but he does know some are missing.

Dr. Huyer plans to send letters to Ontario police chiefs in the next few months to outline the issue and work toward getting all of Ontario's unidentified remains into the RCMP-managed database, which his office supports.

"The whole purpose is to try to identify people, and so if you don't have them in the database, then there won't be the analysis with the missing persons and the potential analysis with Interpol or with the U.S.," Dr. Huyer said.

The database gap troubles Barry Shpeley, whose daughter, Candace, was last seen nearly eight years ago in Surrey, B.C.

"That is an issue of concern, not just for me, but for anybody else that has somebody missing," he said. "My concern is that they're never going to get these into the database."

Darlene Okemaysim-Sicotte, co-chair of Iskwewuk E-wichi-witochik, a Saskatoon-based group that supports families of missing and murdered aboriginal women, wants Ottawa to improve its strategy for finding the missing and identifying the anonymous dead.

"Why build a ladder and forget to put the nails in to hold it up?" she said. "These are people's lives. These are people's families."

**Direct Link:** [http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/substantial-gap-discovered-in-rcmp-database-of-anonymous-dead/article23467796/?cmpid=rss1&click=sf\\_globe&utm\\_content=bufferb5f24&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_source=twitter.com&utm\\_campaign=buffer](http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/substantial-gap-discovered-in-rcmp-database-of-anonymous-dead/article23467796/?cmpid=rss1&click=sf_globe&utm_content=bufferb5f24&utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter.com&utm_campaign=buffer)

## **Missing and murdered: The life and mysterious death of Leah Anderson**

**The unsolved slaying of a 15-year-old Cree girl has left her family and the community in turmoil**

By Connie Walker, [CBC News](#) Posted: Mar 17, 2015 8:08 PM ET Last Updated: Mar 19, 2015 12:09 AM ET

*CBC News continues to investigate missing and murdered indigenous women and girls in Canada, looking at the unsolved cases and telling the stories of the women, their families and their communities.*

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Two years after Leah Anderson's mysterious death, her aunt Myra can't help but constantly replay their final conversation.

"Every day, I picture her walking out that door, and [me] calling out to her, 'make sure you come back before your curfew.' She said, 'yeah,' and those were the last words I said to her."

The Andersons live in the Cree community of God's Lake Narrows, a remote First Nation in northern Manitoba that is only accessible by air or by ice road in the winter.

When Leah left her aunt's house on Jan. 4, 2013, she said she was going skating with friends at the local rink. It was Leah's last weekend at home before she had to head back to school in Cranberry Portage, Man.



'It's, like, on my mind every day,' says Myra Anderson, about the murder of her niece Leah Anderson. 'Like, who could have done this? Do I see this person? Is he around here?' (CBC)

Two days later, Leah's body was found near a snowmobile trail.

It was so badly disfigured, it was initially believed she had been mauled by dogs. She had in fact been brutally beaten, and police determined it was a homicide.

What makes Leah's story even more chilling is that the ice road into God's Lake Narrows was closed the weekend she was murdered, so when the RCMP arrived hours later to investigate, her killer was likely in the community.

Leah's family believes he or she still is.

"It's, like, on my mind every day," said Myra Anderson. "Like, who could have done this? Do I see this person? Is he around here?"

"It scares me that this person might do it again."

## **A sunny outlook despite challenges**

"Shine bright like a diamond."

Those were the last words Leah Anderson posted on Facebook a few hours before she disappeared. Friends and family say the sentiment embodies her spirit — Leah was a natural performer who loved to laugh.

"Full of life — she wasn't shy to do anything," remembers her aunt Myra, who raised Leah and her siblings since 2005.



Tiffany Anderson says her sister always put others before herself.

"She didn't like to see anyone cry or, you know, be upset. She would do anything just to make someone smile."

By all accounts, Leah had a sunny outlook despite a difficult childhood.

During their early years in Thompson, Man., the Anderson kids were in and out of foster care. In 2003, when Leah was six, their father Gilbert Duke was slain. His killers were arrested and convicted of manslaughter.

Hoping for a fresh start, Leah's mother, Sally, moved the family to Winnipeg. But her own grief and struggles with addiction eventually became too much to bear, and all four kids ended up in permanent foster care.

When Leah was 10, her aunt Myra and her husband, Wayne Okemow, took custody of the kids and brought them all to God's Lake Narrows.

Having spent time in 13 different foster homes, Tiffany Anderson used to think of God's Lake Narrows as a safe haven.

Her sister's death shattered that illusion.



"I can't trust it no more," she said.

She feels afraid and won't go out alone.

## An inconclusive investigation

Leah Anderson's death adds one more name to the RCMP's list of [225 unsolved cases of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls across the country](#): Two years after her death, there hasn't been a single arrest.

Many initially believed her death would be an open and shut case.

The winter road was closed at the time, so when the RCMP arrived to investigate, her killer was almost certainly in one of the 285 homes there.

- **Do you have information on Leah's case or any other unsolved case involving missing or murdered indigenous women? Email [connie.walker@cbc.ca](mailto:connie.walker@cbc.ca)**

Because Leah's body was found near a snowmobile trail, her family believes the killer had access to a snow machine, a detail they believe could have narrowed the RCMP's search.



Leah Anderson's body was found near a snowmobile trail, close to this shed. (CBC)

Her family says RCMP investigators arrived in the community within hours of her body being found. But it was snowing heavily on Jan. 6, 2013, and the family worries "the snow just covered up so much evidence."

The family says RCMP homicide investigators only stayed for a few days, and since then have been back sporadically.

The RCMP told CBC News that because the investigation is continuing, they wouldn't disclose much about the case.

They haven't faced much public pressure, either.

Leah's story never made national headlines. I first heard about it when her aunt shared a photo on Facebook, begging for help to find her killer.

Despite an \$11,000 reward for any details about Leah's death, the trail seems to have gone cold.

But rumours abound.

## **Rumours in the community**

In January, my producer and I travelled to God's Lake Narrows to learn more about Leah's story and to try to shed some light on her murder. We spent five days there, meeting people and trying to illuminate Leah's final hours.

Each door we knocked on was a window into a community pushed to extremes.

We heard many stories of abuse and addiction, undoubtedly legacies of residential schools.

Although the reserve is isolated, the houses are close together and often overcrowded. The daily struggle for basic services is evident every time you turn on the radio, where the DJ lists all the homes in need of the sewer or water truck.

Despite its beauty and heavenly name, God's Lake Narrows is not an easy place to live.

It's supposed to be a dry community, but people smuggle liquor in or make their own. The official ban on alcohol has pushed the parties underground.

Gossip runs rampant in any small community, but especially when an unsolved murder is involved.

It is rumoured that Leah went to a house party on the reserve the night she died. Her boyfriend, Max Chubb, told us he went to look for her there but wasn't allowed in.

Josephine Bee hosted the party that night.

"Yeah, I didn't let him [Max Chubb] in because there was only supposed to be girls ... I didn't want him there," she said.

She denies Leah was at her house that night.



There are many rumours about Leah's death, including that Leah went to a house party the night she died. (CBC)

Max says he also checked for Leah at her aunt Myra's house.

"I kept going to her place, checking if she was there. [They] said she wasn't home," said Chubb.

"And that was unusual because she's always back before her curfew."

Chubb said he was interviewed by police in the days after Leah's death. He said he also passed a lie detector test and that police searched his home.

On our last day in God's Lake Narrows, we met two women who heard a shocking admission at a party a couple of months after Leah's death.

One woman, who didn't want to be identified, said a man named Steven Chubb told her he had killed someone.

"We were at my friend's place, we were drinking together," the woman said.

"He just said that out of nowhere, like, 'I already murdered somebody.' I looked at him like, 'who did you murder?' and he told me 'you don't have to worry about it.'"

Her friend Destiny Anderson, Leah's cousin, confirms this story.

"What he said was, 'I committed murder, I'm going away for a long time and I'm going to hell.'"

When we tracked Steven down, he admitted to having said that, but told us that it was "stupid" and that he was "just f--king around."

He also told us he and Leah had had a secret relationship that ended months before her death. He said people were suspicious of him after he sent Leah a message on Facebook the morning after she disappeared.

"I told her 'I hope you didn't tell on us.' I messaged her that. And then it was seen by one of her family members."

Steven Chubb, who is Josephine Bee's brother and Max Chubb's cousin, says he was brought in for questioning twice by the RCMP, and that he passed a lie detector test.

People we spoke to said RCMP investigators returned to God's Lake Narrows last July and took DNA samples from community members, including Steven. He says he hopes the test results will clear his name.

## **Family struggling to move on**

"It kind of disgusts me in my heart that someone would do something like that and then just live like they did nothing wrong," said Tiffany Anderson. For Leah's family, the idea that her killer still lives among them is agonizing.

Angel Duke, Leah's younger sister, says she always has her guard up.



For Tiffany Anderson, the idea that a killer still lives among them is agonizing. (CBC)

"There's, like, just some people you have to watch out for. Like, suspects that I've heard of, when I see them, I kind of just, like, watch them — see how they react when they see me, because they must know that I'm her sister."

Since her sister's death, Tiffany has given birth to a daughter she named Leah, who just turned one.

As much as she would like to find her sister's killer, she's equally intent on leaving God's Lake Narrows, which has come to signify so much heartache.

"I want to get out of here as soon as I can," Tiffany said. "I want to start my own life somewhere with just me and my baby."

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/aboriginal/missing-and-murdered-the-life-and-mysterious-death-of-leah-anderson-1.2998323>

## **Growing number of aboriginal women in Canada ask: 'Am I next?'**

**Aboriginal women are five times more likely to be murdered than non-aboriginal ones, but Ottawa is still refusing a public inquiry on this tragedy.**



Aboriginal Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt and Labour Minister Kellie Leitch held a news conference separate from the other participants after the one-day roundtable on missing and murdered indigenous women on Feb. 27, 2015, in Ottawa.

**By:** Sandra Lovelace Nicholas Published on Thu Mar 19 2015

Following the first-ever national [roundtable on missing and murdered indigenous women](#), it is with a heavy heart that I am writing about this ongoing tragedy — a national epidemic of violence that persists in devastating more families each year, prompting a growing number of aboriginal women to ask: “Am I next?”

According to the RCMP, there have been about 1,200 victims, on and off reserves, between 1980 and 2012. A stark reality of poverty, unemployment and violence can be summarized in one disturbing fact: aboriginal women are five times more likely to be murdered than non-aboriginal ones!

Action must be taken on several fronts: justice, support, protection and prevention. It must be championed at the community, municipal, provincial and federal levels.

While the renewed calls by premiers for a public inquiry are strong indicators of their commitment, the federal government has been sending half-hearted signals. It speaks about action, but its so-called plan is nothing more than a laundry list of existing

piecemeal initiatives — many of them a mere continuation of inadequate efforts not even specific to aboriginal women.

More troubling is the prime minister's and his ministers' view of this tragedy. They are not only dismissing calls for a public inquiry, but deny that this is a social phenomenon. For them, it is rather a series of isolated, [family-based crimes](#) that are best addressed through police investigations.

This approach is truly disturbing.

- Why do they persist in making the issue solely a First Nations one and in believing that the only valid solutions should focus on changing behaviours of aboriginal men on reserves?
- Who believes there is no correlation between the crisis and generalized gender- and race-based discrimination, continued impoverishment or economic marginalization?
- Rather than focusing on police investigations, shouldn't we be proactive and do something *before* people go missing?
- If everything is known about the issue, why is it continuing and why are 20 per cent of the cases still unsolved? We need to understand how to bring the perpetrators to justice, provide closure to the families and protect women from criminals walking free in their communities.

In a [strongly worded report](#) released this month, the UN expert Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women concluded that Canada was responsible for a “grave violation” of human rights due to its “protracted failure” to take sufficient action to stop violence against indigenous women and girls.

As a direct result of this government's inaction, we are now dealing with frustrated aboriginal communities that feel ignored. And, more importantly, we are no closer to ensuring that aboriginal women are treated the same as any other Canadian woman when it comes to being protected against violent crimes.

Is another one-day roundtable in 2016 really the solution to this horrific tragedy? I hope not.

The government needs to do much more. The conditions for a larger national conversation must be created to send a strong signal to aboriginal women that they are not “invisible.” A national inquiry would provide an opportunity for a “foundational” look at the issue and form the basis for co-ordinated national action. Information, education and action need to go hand in hand to prevent this human crisis from persisting.

There is no alternative. Ignoring the calls of experts, organizations and citizens pleading for such conversation is not only disrespectful but indicates — not just to aboriginal communities, but to all Canadians — that we are indeed indifferent as to “who is next?”

*Sandra Lovelace Nicholas is a Maliseet from the Tobique First Nation in New Brunswick who was appointed to the Senate in 2005.*

**Direct Link:** <http://www.thestar.com/opinion/commentary/2015/03/19/growing-number-of-aboriginal-women-in-canada-ask-am-i-next.html>

## **Special Topic: International Indigenous Populations**

### **Native Americans Want to Hunt Gray Whales, Again. Do They Have the Right?**

**Animal rights advocates oppose granting a whaling-ban waiver to the Makah tribe.**



In 1999 the Makah tribe killed its first whale in more than 70 years. It hopes to continue the hunt. (Photo: Anthony Bolante/Reuters)

March 12, 2015 By [David Kirby](#)

What is more important: honoring a Native American tribe's 2,000-year-old tradition and its 160-year-old treaty with the United States, or protecting the lives of gray whales?

That's the question at the core of the Makah tribe's desire to resume hunting gray whales. The Washington state native nation has asked the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to waive federal marine mammal protections that ban the hunt, and they believe the law is on their side. As former chairman Ben Johnson Jr. wrote to NOAA in 2005, "Under the 1855 Treaty of Neah Bay, the Makah Tribe secured an express right to hunt whales throughout its usual and accustomed grounds and stations."



The Makah historically hunted gray whales for food and spiritual ceremonies but ceased in the 1920s, when gray whale numbers were at an all-time low.

After the federal government ended [endangered species](#) protections for gray whales in 1994, the tribe set out to resume its traditional practice. In 1999 Makah hunters legally killed the tribe's first gray whale in more than seven decades.

Since then, the Makah and the federal government have been steadily in and out of court with opponents of whale hunting. In 2005 the Makah applied again for a whaling-ban waiver, without success.

Now the tribe has again asked NOAA for permission to hunt, proposing to take up to 20 gray whales in any five-year period, with five whales killed at most during any calendar year. The agency recently responded with a 1,230-page [draft environmental impact analysis](#) that includes several options, from maintaining the ban to allowing up to 24 whales to be hunted over a six-year period.

"This is the public's opportunity to look at the alternatives," NOAA official Donna Darm said in a [statement](#), "and let us know if we have fully and completely analyzed the impacts."

The public can [comment](#) on the report until June 11, but a number of animal rights groups have already shared their views against the hunt.

Some argue that the Makah do not qualify for "[aboriginal subsistence whaling](#)" allowances under the rules of the International Whaling Commission. "Whaling must be central to the culture of the claimants," said Regina Asmutis-Silvia, the executive director of Whale and Dolphin Conservation in North America, in an email, "and the claimants must have a long and *uninterrupted* history of whaling."

The Makah can't make the latter claim, she said, because of their 70-year hunting hiatus in the 20th century.

Another concern is genetic diversity. According to NOAA spokesman Michael Milstein, "Some distinct groups of gray whales may be amongst the larger Pacific population that migrates up and down the West Coast" but are not visually distinguishable from the much larger Pacific population.

They include western North Pacific gray whales, which are known to travel from Asia to North America and, at an estimated 130 individuals, are critically endangered.

The other is a population of gray whales that remains in the Pacific Northwest over the summer rather than migrating south to Mexico. This group's numbers may be only in the hundreds, and some could be killed during the proposed Makah hunt.



Makah tribal council chairman T.J. Greene did not respond to an interview request. He recently [told a reporter](#) with UPI that he hopes the new application for a legal hunt “leads to being able to practice our traditions, our culture.”

Should culture trump animal welfare? Opponents of aboriginal whaling have sometimes been labeled as racist or culturally insensitive.

“Nothing could be further from the truth,” D.J. Schubert, a wildlife biologist at the Animal Welfare Institute, said in an email. “The reality is that circumstances change, traditions change, and cultures change.”

Instead of whaling, the Makah tribe should establish whale-watching operations, Schubert said. That would allow it to “interact with the gray whale without harming them, bring tourists and their revenue to Neah Bay, while allowing the Makah to educate people about their culture and heritage.”

**Direct Link:** <http://www.takepart.com/article/2015/03/12/makah-tribe-hopes-resume-gray-whale-hunt>

## **To climb Morro Rock or not? Question divides 2 Native American tribes**



Craggy, dome-shaped Morro Rock, rising 576 feet above the shore, is a landmark on California's Central Coast. (Ricardo DeAratanha / Los Angeles Times)

By [Amanda Covarrubias](#)

The Salinan Indians say Morro Rock may be climbed on dates prescribed by the heavens. The Northern Chumash believe Morro Rock should never be trod upon, only appreciated from afar.

Craggy, dome-shaped Morro Rock rises 576 feet above the shore, an attractive site for climbers and a sacred one for two Native American tribes.

And that's the essence of a dispute between the tribes that has simmered for more than a decade.

The Salinan Indians say the dominant landmark on California's Central Coast may be climbed on dates prescribed by the heavens. The Northern Chumash believe it should never be trod upon, only appreciated from afar.

The feud entered the legal arena last December, when the tiny Northern Chumash Tribal Council filed a document in civil court arguing that the Salinan Tribe of Monterey and San Luis Obispo counties should not be allowed to "desecrate a registered Chumash Nation sacred site" and seeking proof of the Salinans' right to climb it.



A peregrine falcon nests on Morro Rock, which has been a falcon preserve since 1968. (Ricardo DeAratonha / Los Angeles Times)

In the folklore of the Chumash, the rock was called Lisamu, positioned at the mouth of a magnificent estuary in the heart of tribal lands that encompassed a large fishing village.

"Lisamu is alive with life that needs to be protected and honored, not trampled upon," the tribal council wrote in a position paper unrelated to the court filing.

In the traditions of the Salinan tribe, it was called Lesamo, where the Falcon of ancient legend killed the serpent Teleekatapelta.

On a recent gray morning, Fred Collins, an elder with the Northern Chumash Tribal Council, stood at the base of the rock and looked skyward as a peregrine falcon glided over the jagged peaks.

"This is a rookery for unbelievable birds," Collins said. "And it's a migratory path for so many. Aside from the sacred issues, why would you want to interfere with that?"

Today, hiking Morro Rock — a state historic landmark and peregrine falcon preserve since 1968 — is prohibited for most of the public. But the Salinans have been climbing it

on and off since about 2000, when elder John Burch sought a permit to conduct rituals atop the volcanic mass formed more than 20 million years ago. The permit was approved.

"It's broadly the policy of the department to allow reasonable requests for religious practices to take place on state park property," Joe Mette, then district superintendent for the California Department of Parks and Recreation, said in 2002. "He made some fairly compelling arguments."

In 2006, the Salinan Indians, state parks and the Native American Heritage Commission, a state agency responsible for helping protect Native American cultural resources, formalized an agreement allowing the tribe to climb the rock for religious ceremonies twice a year during the summer and winter solstices.

It's broadly the policy of the department to allow reasonable requests for religious practices to take place on state park property. - Joe Mette, then district superintendent for the state Department of Parks and Recreation, in 2002

Burch told The Times in 2002 that he climbed Morro Rock to practice rituals handed down through the ages. He sat alone at the top in blackness and starlight and entered an altered state, asking for spiritual guidance, he said. He finished the night of prayer feeling as if he was "floating on air."

Burch said recently that five of his tribe's 371 members ascend the rock, the maximum number allowed under the most recent five-year agreement that expires in 2019. Photographs of past climbs show tribal members carrying backpacks as they scramble up brush-covered boulders to forge a trail along the jagged incline. Another photo from 2003 shows Burch standing alone at the top of the peak.

The rock's rugged landscape makes for a tough climb. Three 15-year-old boys had to be rescued last month while they were trying to scale the east face, and 10 days later, another climber was rescued after he got stuck part of the way up.

As for Burch, he declined to comment further, saying he wanted to wait until the Native American Heritage Commission weighs in.

"There's a process in place at this time, and we'll wait to see what the findings are at the end of the process," he said.

The Northern Chumash Tribal Council maintains that it was never consulted about the arrangement but should have been because its 35 members were directly affected by the action, said Dennis J. Balsamo, an attorney for the tribal council.

Under state law, the state parks department is required to consult with Native American tribes when their sacred sites or cultural institutions are affected by projects or policies.

Terre L. Robinson, an attorney for the Native American Heritage Commission, declined to comment, citing possible pending litigation.

In a petition filed in San Luis Obispo County Superior Court, the Northern Chumash Tribal Council — a separate entity from the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians, which owns the Chumash Casino in Santa Barbara County — is seeking documentation proving the Salinans have a right to climb the rock.

In the back-and-forth on the issue, Collins also has been asked by the commission to prove his heritage, and the tribal council is seeking any documents from the agency that may have questioned his ancestry.

"It is unheard of that any Native American would be required to prove their heritage," the document states, adding that the council "believes its members were being singled out for harassment."

As further evidence that the Salinans have no claim on the sacred site, the Chumash say the historic boundary between the two tribes rests some 40 miles to the north at Ragged Point in Monterey County, citing research by anthropologist Robert O. Gibson.

"There is no historic or religious connection between the ancient Salinan People and Morro Rock," Balsamo wrote.

The Chumash don't mind if other tribes gather for ceremonies at the base of the rock, Collins said, but climbing it goes too far.

"Morro Rock has such a great presence along our coast," Collins said. "Fishermen and people of old times always viewed Morro Rock as a landmark in the ocean with special energies. It's a magical place."

The peak is one of the Nine Sisters, a row of volcanic mounds stretching a dozen miles from San Luis Obispo to the sea. Others are larger, but Morro Rock rests at the water's edge.

The Portuguese explorer Juan Cabrillo named it in 1542 for a word meaning "round hill." Quarrying in the first half of the 20th century removed about a third of the rock's surface, and the material was used to build breakwaters in the harbor of Morro Bay.

If the climbing controversy isn't resolved by the time the summer solstice rolls around in June, Balsamo said, the tribe may be forced seek a court order to stop the ascent.

"We hope we can come to a resolution on this issue in a positive way," Collins said. "But we're willing to stand up and not get kicked around."

**Direct Link:** <http://www.latimes.com/local/california/la-me-morro-rock-20150314-story.html>

# Tobacco Prevention Campaigns For Native Americans Tell Kids To 'Keep It Sacred'

By [Aaron Schrank](#) • Mar 13, 2015



A poster hung on the wall of a school on the Wind River Indian Reservation. It's an example of Native American-specific tobacco prevention efforts used on reservations around the country.

In most schools, campaigns to keep students from smoking use simple slogans like “Be Smart, Don’t Start,” but those targeting Native American kids are a bit different. On Wyoming’s Wind River Indian Reservation, you’re likely to hear more nuanced catchphrases like “Keep It Sacred,” and “Traditional Use, Not Commercial Abuse.”

That’s because tobacco is an indispensable part of many Native American traditions. But with sky-high smoking rates on reservations, Wyoming Public Radio’s Aaron Schrank reports that the need to limit nontraditional tobacco use is greater than ever.

Growing up on the Wind River Indian Reservation, Reinette Tendore started smoking cigarettes when she was 13.

“It was because I was surrounded by it,” says Tendore. “My family smoked, and all of my peers did.”

Native Americans smoke at higher rates than any racial or ethnic group in the country. Forty-five percent of Native American Wyomingites use tobacco, according to the Wyoming Department of Health. That's compared to 18 percent of all Americans.

Tendore quit for good after 10 years and when she had a son, she made sure he knew about the dangers of smoking.

"My mom said it was bad, so I listened, and never did it," says Hudda Herrera, Tendore's 14-year-old son.

He's faced the same peer pressure his mom did—but has stayed smoke-free with her help. So, a few years ago, when Tendore lit up in front of Hudda and his cousins as part of a traditional ceremony, Tendore says the kids were a little confused.

"They looked at me like, 'Auntie, why are you doing that?,' says Tendore. "And my son even said, 'Mom, can you do that?' So I used that as a teaching moment. Like, this is where we're going to learn."



Hudda Herrera and mother Reinette Tendore.

What Tendore then taught them is that there's an important difference between puffing on Marlboros for pleasure, which is harmful and addictive—and using the tobacco plant in ceremony to offer up prayers to the Creator.

Hudda says he now understands tobacco use is complicated.

"I see it at ceremonies and everything—like tribal ceremonies that I go to," he says. "Yeah, I think it's a—if it's used the right way—it's a good thing to use."

The right to use tobacco has been passed down here through the generations. Stanford Devinney teaches the Shoshone language to students at Wyoming Indian Elementary School and Wyoming Indian High School. The 55-year-old is also an Eastern Shoshone sun dance leader and an authority on traditional tobacco use.

“When they’re saying their prayers, the smoke of the tobacco is lifted to the heavens and the prayer is with that smoke,” says Devinney. “So we don’t actually inhale the smoke. We send it up to the heavens—to Tam Apo—so that he can hear the prayers of the smoke.”

Tobacco is a sacred gift given to Native Americans by the Creator long ago, Devinney says. Along with herbs like sage and sweet grass, it’s used in a variety of ceremonies and prayer rituals. But Devinney says, over the years, commercial tobacco has snuck into ceremonies.

“In the beginning, the tobacco was grown and gathered by different tribes,” says Devinney. “They grew it just like they grow corn. Nowadays, tobacco can be purchased anywhere.”

Devinney remembers that the tobacco of choice used to be Bull Durham. These days, it’s often American Spirit cigarettes. He says no matter what’s used, ceremonial smoking should be occasional, not habitual—as health risks are serious.

“There’s the good side of that tobacco and the bad side of the tobacco,” says Devinney. “Just like water—it’s a life giver and it’s life taker.”

A lot of the Native Americans here, they like to say, ‘well, it is my tradition or it is my heritage to use tobacco,’ I’m having to find that real fine line between ‘are they really using it traditionally?’ or ‘are they addicted?’ You know there’s a lot of denial in addiction, and we’re no different.

With store-bought cigarettes now the source of smoke at most ceremonies, the line between traditional use and commercial abuse is blurrier than ever. But it’s a line that needs to be clearly drawn, says Brian Enos a tobacco prevention specialist working on the reservation.

“A lot of the Native Americans here—they like to say, ‘well, it is my tradition or it is my heritage to use tobacco,’” Enos says. “I’m having to find that real fine line between ‘are they really using it traditionally?’ or ‘are they addicted?’ You know there’s a lot of denial in addiction, and we’re no different.”

Enos regularly visits schools to teach kids about the difference between traditional and commercial tobacco use.

“We say, ‘you know you guys come from a very honorable people,’” says Enos. “‘We’re unique in our beliefs and the way that we live.’ It kind of builds a little bit of pride in



them. So, when you get them when they're young, they're like, 'I'm never going to smoke,' but unfortunately, peer pressure changes them when they're adolescents."

Not all of them. Hudda Herrera has pledged to be drug, alcohol and tobacco-free. His mom, Reinette Tendore says when she was a smoker, she often mistook her addiction for tradition.

When I had a stressful day or something was really going on in our family, I'd be like, 'Let me go outside and have a cigarette and pray,'" Tendore says. "I know I did that a lot."

But Hudda knows better—and wants the same for his peers.

"I would want them to stay traditional with the tobacco and keep it that way," he says.

And with youth smoking rates here far above state and national averages, the need to keep tobacco traditional is great.

*These reports are part of 'The American Graduate: Let's Make It Happen'—a public media initiative to address the dropout crisis. Supported by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.*

**Direct Link:** <http://wyomingpublicmedia.org/post/tobacco-prevention-campaigns-native-americans-tell-kids-keep-it-sacred>

## **Jackson most infamous as anti-Native American president**

Albert Bender 12:31 p.m. CDT March 16, 2015



This is in response to the recent op-eds praising the Indian killer Andrew Jackson and a plethora of articles in this paper reporting on local efforts by the newly formed Andrew Jackson Foundation to elevate him to the status of a great president.



Jackson has been lauded as the "most important American president," the "founder of American democracy," the "People's President" and the "most famous citizen Nashville ever produced." Local Native Americans have already held a protest demonstration at The Hermitage and more are being planned (including one scheduled for Sunday, Jackson's birthday).

This gets even worse. As part of the exhibit at The Hermitage, he is now extolled as the "first president to raise a Native American child."

This is incredibly outrageous and beyond insensitive to Native Americans, especially present-day Creek citizens. The child referred to is Lincoya, a Creek child taken from a battlefield, from the body of his mother after Jackson's army had killed all of his adult relatives.

Creek citizens are outraged beyond words that this is considered another reason to praise Jackson in light of the circumstances involved. Moreover, Jackson did not raise Lincoya; the poor, captive child died at 16 after repeatedly trying to run away to rejoin his people.

Recently, before the opening of this heinous exhibit, a delegation of Creek citizens met with Hermitage CEO Howard Kittell and were assured that their views would be included in the exhibit. Their perspectives were obviously given no consideration.

As a Native American, a Cherokee, who also has experienced intergenerational trauma because of Jackson, I feel the same outrage, agony and pain of my Creek brothers and sisters at this abominable attempt to exploit and distort the memory of Lincoya (he lies buried in an unmarked grave at The Hermitage).

We can never forget or minimize the fact that Jackson carried out the most murderous removal campaign against American Indians — Cherokees, Creeks, Choctaws, Chickasaws and Seminoles — in U.S. history. He was directly responsible for the hideous, agonizing deaths of tens of thousands of Native Americans, beginning with the Creek War of 1813. Jackson was responsible for the deaths of thousands of Muscogee Creek people in that conflict. Jackson led armies, largely composed of Tennessee volunteers, who conducted war against noncombatants, women and children.

According to contemporary Creek sources, hundreds of Creek women and children were sold into slavery. They were starved, raped and murdered. Creek children, mostly little boys, were sold for \$20 each as "pets." Orphaned children were taken off the battlefield from the bodies of their mothers as "trophy."

Subsequently, Jackson signed the Indian Removal Bill of May 28, 1830, and militarily enforced fraudulent treaties that sent thousands on the death marches. Of the Cherokee "Trail of Tears" it was said that no one under 6 or over 60 survived the hideous march west.

A relatively little known fact is that Cherokees held captive in concentration camps were deprived of the use of soap, so bent was Jackson on Indian extermination. When Cherokee leaders were able to finally prevail upon the Army for the issuance of soap, Jackson, upon hearing of this, flew into a rage at The Hermitage and demanded that the order allowing for the use of soap be rescinded. This is the so-called "Peoples President." What people? Surely not Indian people!

Yet, the Andrew Jackson Foundation wants to elevate this monster, this ethnic cleanser, to the status of a great president. Jackson was a racist devil incarnate — an early-day American Hitler whose deadly legacy for American Indians remains extant to this very day.

We, Native Americans, call upon all decent-minded residents of Nashville to join us in opposition to these efforts to elevate this purveyor of genocide to the status of greatness.

Albert Bender is a Native American activist. Email him at [albertbender07@yahoo.com](mailto:albertbender07@yahoo.com).

**Direct Link:** <http://www.tennessean.com/story/opinion/contributors/2015/03/15/andrew-jackson-infamous-anti-native-american-president/70285340/>

## Newly Recognised Indigenous Rights a Dead Letter?

By [Edgardo Ayala](#) and [Claudia Ávalos](#)



Tito Kilizapa in his workshop in Izalco in western El Salvador. The 74-year-old indigenous craftsman makes and plays the marimba, a percussion instrument that was popular in Central America in the 19th century and which he is trying to revive among children in the area. Credit: Edgardo Ayala/IPS

IZALCO, El Salvador , Mar 5 2015 (IPS) - Nearly three years after the rights of El Salvador's indigenous people were recognised in the constitution, there are still no public policies and laws to translate that historic achievement into reality.

In June 2014 the single-chamber legislature ratified a constitutional reform [passed in April 2012](#) which acknowledged new rights of native peoples in this Central American nation. But the leaders of indigenous communities and organisations told IPS they were worried it would all remain on paper.

“There have been changes full of good intentions, but the good intentions need a little orientation,” Betty Pérez, the head of the [Salvadoran National Indigenous Coordinating Council](#) (CCNIS), told Tierramérica.

The reform of article 63 of the constitution states that “El Salvador recognises indigenous peoples and will adopt policies aimed at maintaining and developing their ethnic and cultural identity, worldview, values and spirituality.”

These cover a wide range of areas, such as respect for indigenous peoples’ medicinal practices and their collective rights to land. And according to lawmakers of different stripes, the constitutional amendment pays a historic debt to the country’s native people and helps pull them out of the invisibility to which they had been condemned.

Pérez said a process of dialogue is underway between indigenous organisations and communities and the different government ministries involved, with a view to designing public policies, but that little headway has been made because “there is no unified vision and each group is following its own logic.”

“If the reform does not establish mechanisms to give it life, if the legislators do not approve the necessary secondary laws, it’s going to be left as dead letter in the constitution.” -- Supreme Court Justice Florentín Meléndez

The CCNIS is pressing for the country to ratify the International Labour Organisation’s (ILO) [Convention 169](#) concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries. But no date has been set for the legislature to ratify the legal instrument, which protects indigenous rights.

Pérez spoke with IPS during the commemoration of the 1932 indigenous uprising, held in this municipality of 74,000 people 65 km west of San Salvador, which was the epicentre of the revolt.

The rebellion in Izalco, demanding better conditions for native people, was brutally repressed by the dictatorship of Maximiliano Martínez (1931-1944), leaving between 30,000 and 40,000 dead.

El Salvador’s indigenous people were ignored and invisible for decades, under the argument that after the massacre, they blended in with the ‘mestiza’ or mixed-race population, abandoning their languages and traditional dress, to avoid persecution under successive military regimes, which accused them of being communists.

For that reason there is little documentation or up-to-date figures on their socioeconomic circumstances in this impoverished country of 6.3 million people.

According to the [Perfil de los Pueblos Indígenas de El Salvador](#), a report on the country's indigenous people available only in Spanish and jointly produced by the World Bank, the Salvadoran government and indigenous organisations, approximately 10 percent of the country's population is Amerindian, divided into three major groups: the Nahua/Pipil in the centre and west of the country; the Lenca in the east; and the Cacaopera in the north.

The study, published in 2003, reports that most of the country's native people depend on subsistence agriculture on leased land, while others work as hired rural labour. A large number of communities also make and sell traditional crafts.

Native organisations and experts say that implementing or applying the constitutional amendment requires the adoption of an integral policy with an inclusive focus and respect for the world vision of each native group, in education, health, environment, labour, community development, and land titling.

The health system, for example, must have an “intercultural” focus making it possible for native people to receive adequate health services that are respectful of their culture, said a 2013 report by then United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples [James Anaya](#), who visited the country in 2012.

That kind of focus would make it possible to recognise traditional practices such as the healing carried out by 88-year-old Rosalío Turush in Izalco – known as Itzalku in the Náhuat language.

The elderly native healer learned to use herbs from her ancestors, and to ease pain with massage in the case of broken bones or sprains.

“Back then, since medicine was hard to come by, people turned to plants,” Turush told *Tierramérica*. “For example, to cure dysentery, there is a plant called ‘trencillo’.”

“Now people mainly come for me to give them a massage to relieve a pulled muscle, a broken bone, because I’ve still got the touch,” she added.

In order to put the constitutional reform into practice, “secondary laws” to regulate the new rights must be passed. But almost no progress in this direction has been made in the legislature.

“If the reform does not establish mechanisms to give it life, if the legislators do not approve the necessary secondary laws, it’s going to be left as dead letter in the constitution,” said Supreme Court Justice Florentín Meléndez during the commemoration of the massacre here in Izalco.

Meléndez also referred to the touchy issue of indigenous communities' access to collective land ownership – which was already in the constitution but was never regulated to put it into practice.

“Communal property is already recognised, the only thing that is needed is for the lawmakers to continue moving towards concrete fulfillment of those rights, not just on paper but in real life,” he added.

In the late 19th century, the communal land of the country's indigenous peoples was taken from them by coffee plantation owners.

The landowners turned tens of thousands of indigenous people and peasant farmers into casual labourers who lived in the most abject poverty on the coffee plantations, sowing the seed of social discontent which, decades later, was one of the causes of the [1980-1992 civil war](#) that left 80,000 people – mainly civilians – dead.

The 1932 uprising also protested the theft of indigenous land.

“That's where the 1932 massacre came from, because the landowners, if someone didn't sell them their land, stole it at gunpoint,” Tito Kilizapa, a 74-year-old indigenous craftsman and musician from Izalpo, told Tierramérica.

Pérez, with the CCNIS, pointed out that the constitutional reform was delayed for a decade because of opposition from powerful economic groups, which feared the expropriation of communal land taken from indigenous communities in the 19th century, or other measures that would hurt their own interests.

These groups are also trying to block the approval of the secondary laws needed to implement the constitutional amendment, especially with respect to indigenous access to land.

“We are immersed in a capitalist system, we have groups of power...there are economic and political elements that keep the government from carrying out these processes of change,” Pérez said.

Gustavo Pineda, national director of indigenous affairs in the Secretariat of Culture, told Tierramérica that “these are all processes; changing the situation for indigenous peoples is a long, uphill process.”

The government official said “native peoples have been systematically neglected and ignored for a long time – we're talking about centuries.”

This story was originally published by Latin American newspapers that are part of the Tierramérica network.

*Edited by Estrella Gutiérrez/Translated by Stephanie Wildes*

**Direct Link:** <http://www.ipsnews.net/2015/03/newly-recognised-indigenous-rights-a-dead-letter/>

## **Supaman Becomes First Native American to Perform at Google HQ**

[ICTMN Staff](#)

3/16/15

On March 12, Crow rapper and fancy dancer Supaman became the first Native American musician to perform at the Googleplex, world headquarters of Internet giant Google, located in Mountain View, California.

Supaman, aka Christian Parrish, has been attracting notice within and outside of Indian country ever since his performance of "Prayer Loop Song" became a YouTube sensation a year ago. He was picked up by an MTV blog and later made the list for the MTV Rebel Music: Native America extravaganza.

"It was a great honor to represent Native people in a positive way there," [he told Powwows.com](#). "I hope they will continue with acknowledging Native talent and just Native people in general."

Supaman snapped several photos and some video of his day at Google, including a clip of him riding a one of the company's GBikes around the campus in fancy dance regalia—another first, he reckons. Visit [@Supamanhiphop](#) on Twitter and [facebook.com/Supamanhiphop](https://www.facebook.com/Supamanhiphop) for more images, as well as information on his ongoing "I Rap For Change" tour.



Source: [twitter.com/Supamanhiphop](https://twitter.com/Supamanhiphop)

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2015/03/16/supaman-becomes-first-native-american-perform-google-hq-159629>

## **Maine Native American Tribe Joins Hundreds Of Others Considering Growing Marijuana Commercially**

by [Kira Lerner](#) Posted on March 19, 2015 at 8:00 am Updated: March 19, 2015 at 9:28 am





Audience members look on at a tribal marijuana conference for tribal governments considering whether to legalize marijuana for medicinal, agricultural, or recreational use, Friday, Feb. 27, 2015, in Tulalip, Wash.

Native American reservations have long topped the list of the poorest communities in the United States, with [one in four](#) Native Americans living in poverty and [little potential](#) for new businesses or growth. But a Native American tribe in Maine said this week it is considering commercial-scale production of marijuana, joining hundreds of other tribes looking at the industry as a potential goldmine for economic opportunity.

“We are looking from a health perspective as well as an economic perspective into the potential,” Rep. Henry John Bear, who represents the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians in the Maine legislature, [told the Portland Press Herald](#). “We have tribal members who are very interested in pursuing this.”

In December, the U.S. Department of Justice [announced it would allow](#) tribes to legalize marijuana on their reservations. In the months since, many tribes have expressed interest. One California tribe has started work on a \$10 million medical marijuana greenhouse that is set to open this month, making it the first tribe to grow and manufacture medical marijuana on tribal land.

Bear said operating a medical marijuana operation would be a natural fit for the Maliseet tribe, whose cultural traditions include smoking herbs. And other Maliseet tribes in Canada have already started producing marijuana for commercial use — Colorado Springs, CO-based OmniCare Health Solutions has an agreement with a tribe in Canada to build a medical marijuana facility on 1,000 acres of the reservation.

The Pinoleville Pomo Nation in California’s Mendocino County is currently building the 100,000-square-foot greenhouse on its reservation using money [contributed by FoxBarry Farms](#), a company that helps tribes with economic development projects, and with consulting help from United Cannabis, [according to Indian County Today](#).



The CEO of FoxBarry [told the Huffington Post](#) last month that he has received more than 100 calls from tribes across the county that are also interested in commercially producing marijuana.

“Tribes want what any government wants for its people, and that’s financial independence,” CEO Barry Brautman said. “They want to earn their own money, provide education, health care and housing. This new industry allows them to be more economically independent.”

Three weeks ago, the first ever [Tribal Marijuana Conference](#) convened in Tulalip, WA to discuss how to financially build a marijuana business on a reservation and the infrastructure that would be required. Tribal leaders discussed how to ensure their businesses would follow federal law and one cannabis attorney even encouraged tribes to enter the marijuana banking services industry and set up “off-shore” banking operations to lend to marijuana businesses.

The revenue potential is becoming clear in Colorado, which has already taken in [more than \\$15 million](#) in tax revenue for its education system through the sale of legal marijuana. Tribes could tap into the same potential revenue if they were to grow and manufacture marijuana.

The Pinoleville tribe has said it will only sell its marijuana to authorized users and dispensaries in California, where medical marijuana is legal and recreational marijuana [may become legal](#) after the 2016 election. But issues could arise for tribes located within states that have not legalized marijuana — people could easily purchase a product on the reservation and then leave, in violation of state law. For that reason, Brautman said that he will not engage in projects with tribes located outside the 23 states where it’s legal for now.

Some Native communities are concerned about engaging in an industry that could have a negative impact on their populations, and have even outlawed marijuana. Others cannot resist the potential to improve their suffering economies. A [2013 report](#) on Native American unemployment from the Economic Policy Institution said that Native American communities tend to have lower levels of education and Indians are far less likely to earn a high school diploma than other U.S. citizens. Natives also continue to suffer racial discrimination in the job market.

The federal government has [made efforts](#) to create jobs and promote economic stimulation on reservations, but the unemployment rate has remained in the [double digits](#) since 2008 and [nearly doubles](#) the unemployment rate for white workers.

The possibility for marijuana production to create economic stimulation on reservations is even more apparent to tribal members who remember the opportunities associated with the growth of gaming on Indian reservations in the 1980s and 90s.

In 1976, the [U.S. Supreme Court ruled](#) that state governments do not have authority to regulate the activities of Indians on reservations. The decision laid the groundwork for the gaming industry to take root on reservations across the country and casinos, bingo rooms and lotteries proliferated on tribes.

The industry has continued to grow across the country and [as of 2011](#), there were 460 Indian gaming operations run by 240 federally-recognized tribes in the United States. The revenue generated by the casinos [amounted to \\$28 billion](#) in 2013, more than double what the establishments generated in 2001.

While gaming money is the largest source of income for most Native communities, the rise of gaming has benefited the economies and unemployment rates of some tribes more than others. [One study](#) found the employment rate on reservations increased by five percent just four years after they opened casinos, but at the same time, many tribes [have been unsuccessful](#) and have been hurt by [competition from non-Indian gaming](#) that has forced their casinos to shut down.

Gaming has also brought a range of social problems, including [crime, alcoholism and illegal drug use](#). According to a [2012 study](#) by University of Maryland researchers, there is a 10 percent increase in auto theft, larceny and bankruptcy and a significant rise in substance abuse, mental illness, suicide and violent crime when a new casino opens in town — all issues already prevalent on Native American reservations. Marijuana has the potential to bring new addiction problems to reservations, although the addictive properties of the drug are [in debate](#).

**Direct Link:** <http://thinkprogress.org/economy/2015/03/19/3635685/native-american-marijuana-economy/>